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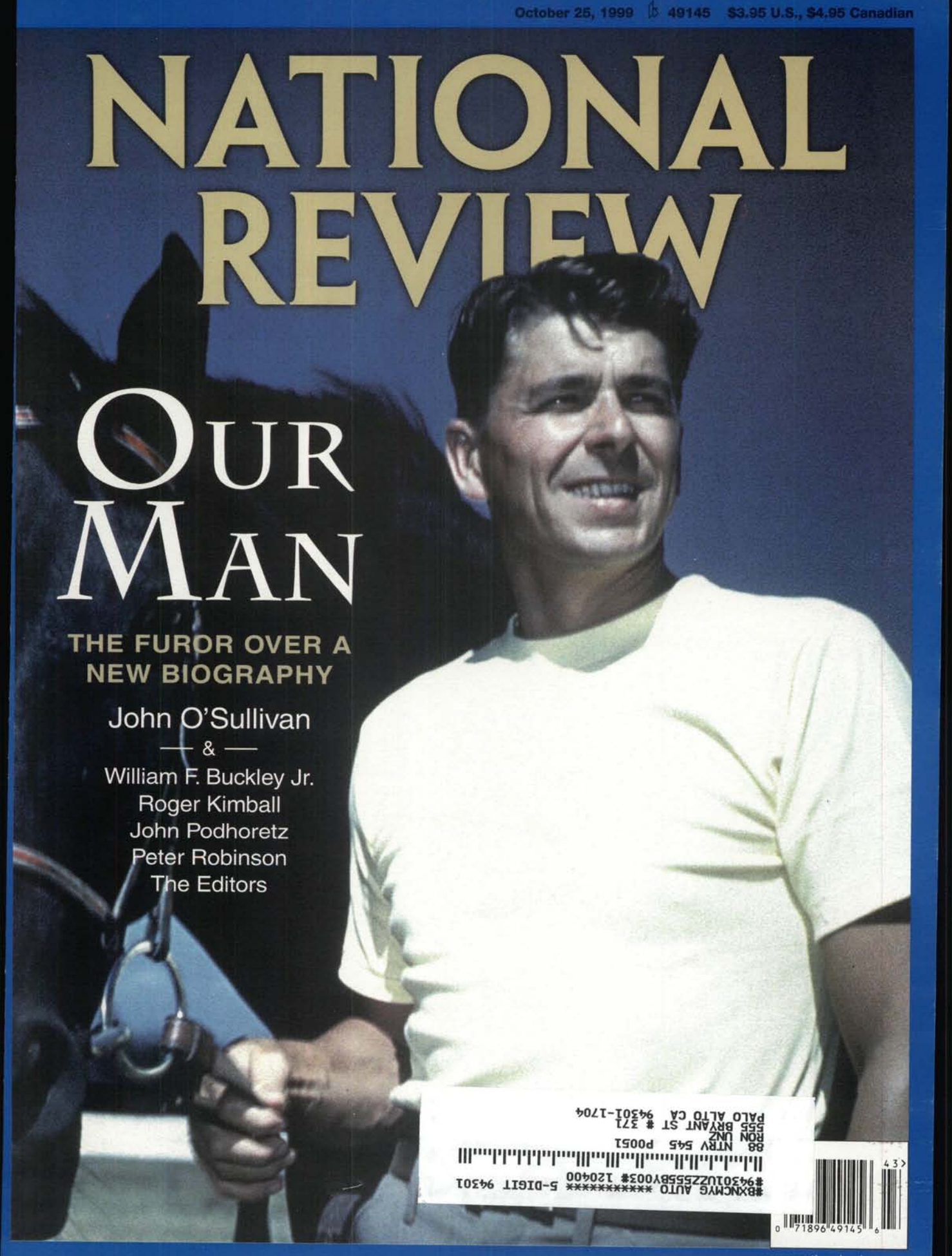

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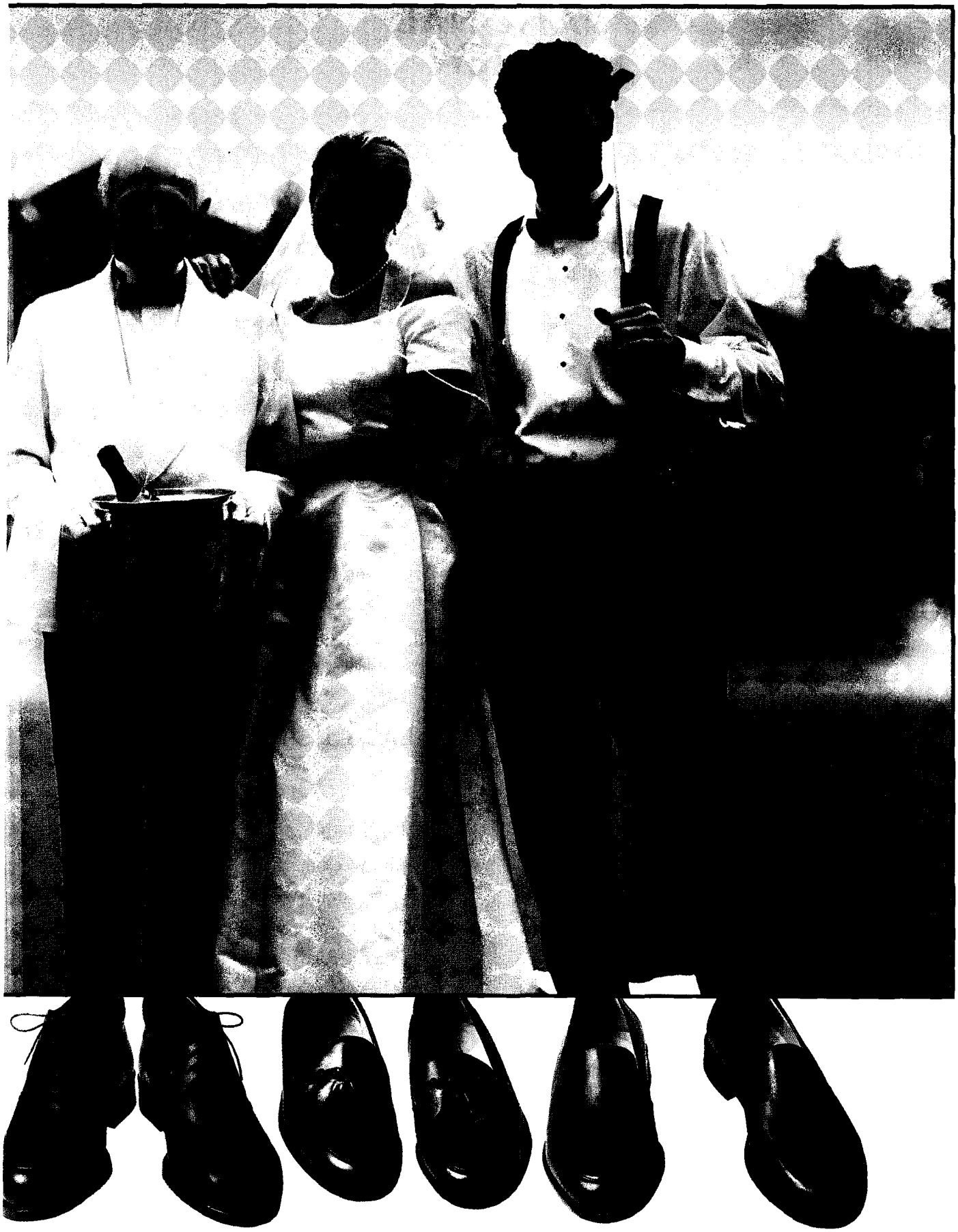

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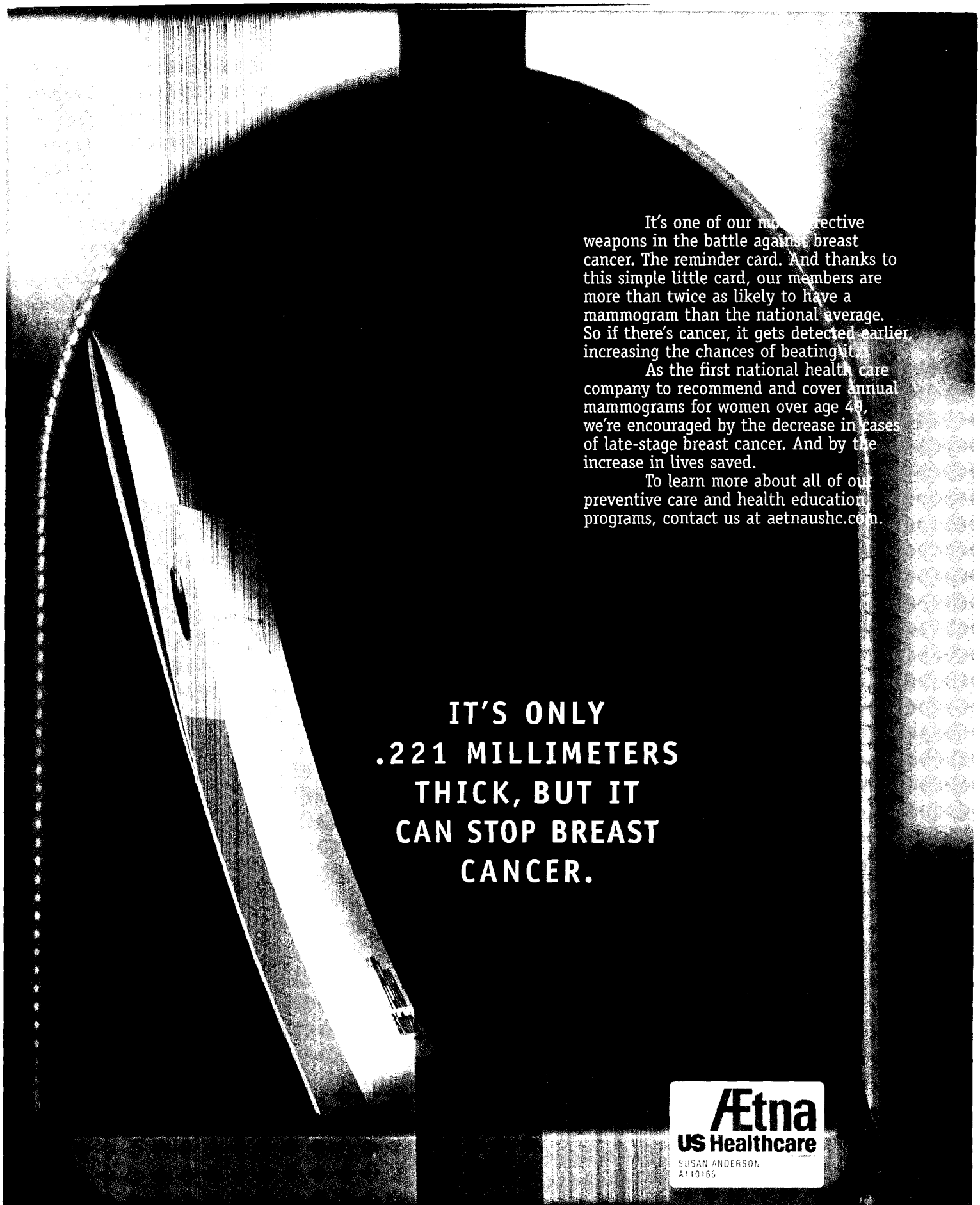

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■ LETTERS ■

CONSTITUTIONAL DIVIDE

Over the many years I have read NATIONAL REVIEW I have only occasionally differed with your editorial judgments, never with your journalistic integrity. Until now.

Your editorial paragraph on the Religious Liberty Protection Act ("The Week," Sept. 27) grossly distorts the issues and motives of its supporters. You contend that RLPA supporters want something more than historic legislative accommodation for religious liberty; and you say that RLPA would allow judges to decide that "an individual's autonomy trumps the political judgments of state and localities."

Precisely the reverse is the case. RLPA supporters want only the legislative accommodation that was historically provided, whereby the government had to show a compelling state interest before it could restrict religious liberty. It was the Supreme Court, I would remind you, in *Smith* v. *Employment Division* (1990), that eliminated this historic test. To restore this standard, Congress, in 1993, virtually unanimously passed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

But in *Boerne* v. *Flores* (1997), the Court struck down RFRA, a case of clear judicial overreach, nullifying the people's right of self-determination and unleashing a series of religious-liberty abuses.

In Greenville, South Carolina, for example, officials banned home Bible-study groups, but not Tupperware parties. In Los Angeles, the city council decided a synagogue would disrupt a residential neighborhood, but granted a zoning variance to a gay bar. In Douglas County, Colorado, officials have tried to limit churches' hours of operation.

It was to remedy this—to protect the people's right of self-determination, and to restore the historic standard for First Amendment protection—that RLPA was passed overwhelmingly in the House. The most vigorous dissent came not from conservatives but from liberals who wrongly attempted to equate gay rights with First Amendment religious liberty.

By reinstating the "compelling state interest" test, RLPA reaffirms the historic protection granted to First Amendment rights of religious exercise against arbitrary government officials and judges. This is the precise opposite of the arguments you make in your editorial. I hope you will set the record straight.

Charles W. Colson
Chairman, Prison Fellowship Ministries
Washington, D.C.

THE EDS.: *For most of our history, legislatures have been able to work out religious accommodations piecemeal, without interference from courts. So, for instance, laws prohibiting alcohol often made exceptions for religious ceremonies. Only in 1963 did the Warren Court discover a right, enforceable in court, to such accommodations. For the next 27 years, judges were able to exempt individuals and groups from laws whenever they found the states' interest in applying those laws uncompelling.*

This is the "historic test" Mr. Colson lauds, and that the Rehnquist Court rightly repudiated in 1990. Attempts to restore it may not be unconstitutional—we thought that in Boerne *the Court was wrong to strike down RFRA, and said so (see "Supreme Faith," July 28, 1997)—but they are misguided. The Greenville and Los Angeles examples would be better treated as equal-protection cases.*

Finally, let us dispel any doubt on one point: We never meant to impugn the motives of Charles Colson or any of his fellows. We just think they're incorrect in this instance.

THE MERIT OF MCCAIN

Richard Lowry delivered a fine report from the campaign trail on Sen. John McCain ("The Allure of John McCain," Sept. 27). However, I'm still perplexed: Why are conservatives and the more moderate GOP establishment so quick to dismiss the senator's candidacy? It's as though Republicans are willing, if not eager, to repeat their most destructive mistake of 1996: failing to nominate a candidate who offers anything distinguishable from his Democratic counterpart.

Some blame Sen. Robert J. Dole's failure in 1996 on his playing the war-hero card. But it was really his lack of charisma and inability to relate to voters that led to his undoing. McCain has what Dole lacked. As we near the post-Clinton era, the public-relations–challenged GOP would be wise to start taking note.

Domenick J. Cosentino
Conshohocken, Pa.

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■ FOR THE RECORD ■

■ White House bans *Investor's Business Daily* reporter **Paul Sperry** from social events after he asks President **Clinton** about Chinese campaign contributions in 1996. According to *Seattle Times* account, Clinton's "face turned red and he launched into an argument that lasted nearly 10 minutes." Said Clinton: "The FBI wants you to write about that rather than about Waco." . . . "If President Reagan could be an actor and become president," says Clinton at Hollywood fundraiser, "maybe I could become an actor. I've got a good pension, I can work for cheap." . . . At event sponsored by Access Now for Gay and Lesbian Equality, the Gay Men's Chorus sings line, "You can't have New York without Queens." Says Clinton: "If someone would furnish me with the lyrics of that song, I would be eternally grateful." . . . Since 1996, Clinton administration has declared on average one region of country a "disaster area" per week, doubling rate of 12 years earlier, says *U.S. News & World Report*. . . . Clintons' foreign trips cost $72 million last year, reports General Accounting Office. . . . Next year, Clinton may finally go to Vietnam, reports *Washington Post*.

■ Department of Keep-It-To-Yourself: At fundraiser, **Tipper Gore** introduces husband. "I love it when she beckons me with her finger like that," says vice president. "I always respond." . . . Sen. **Daniel Patrick Moynihan** (D., N.Y.) issues long-expected **Bill Bradley** endorsement: "Nothing is the matter with Mr. **Gore**, except that he can't be elected president." . . . Gore: "I thought politics was the absolute last thing I would ever do with my life." . . . *Newsweek* poll of New Hampshire primary voters: 40 percent favor Gore, 36 percent prefer Bradley. . . . Democratic consultant **Bill Carrick**: "I think the distance between Vice President Gore and **Ted Kennedy**'s pretty small" (courtesy of *The Hotline*).

■ **Dan Quayle** quits presidential race and says "**Bush** and **McCain** ought to hold a couple of debates," but face-off unlikely before Jan. 15 Iowa meeting. . . . Following Quayle withdrawal, Bush picks up Indiana's Rep. **David McIntosh** and former Sen. **Dan Coats** as supporters. . . . **Pat Robertson**: "So far, George Bush said things that would cause me to believe he would be worthy of the support of the [Christian] Coalition were he the nominee of the party." . . . Sen. John McCain says he would pay for school-voucher program by cutting corporate welfare for oil, gas, ethanol, and sugar. . . . **Gary Bauer** proposes 16 percent tax for income, capital gains, and business profits. . . . **Steve Forbes** promises signing partial-birth–abortion ban as first presidential act. . . . **Donald Trump** writes in *Wall Street Journal*: "Yes, I am considering a run for president." Promises to serve one term,

throws cold water on Social Security reform, and pledges tough stands against Cuba and North Korea. . . . With Iowa scheduled to hold its caucus on Jan. 31, New Hampshire has scheduled primary for Feb. 1.

■ Minority leader **Dick Gephardt** (D., Mo.) in *The Hill*: "We have dominated the agenda since [the 1994] election." . . . In CNN/*USA Today* poll, House leaders score low on name identification: House Speaker **Denny Hastert** (52 percent), majority leader **Dick Armey** (51 percent), majority whip **Tom DeLay** (46 percent). . . . National Rifle Association will stay on sidelines during Nov. 16 special election to replace late Rep. **George Brown** (D., Calif.) because both candidates oppose gun control. . . . Rep. **Tom Campbell** (R., Calif.) and Silicon Valley entrepreneur **Ron K. Unz** consider running for Senate, but Sen. **Dianne Feinstein** (D., Calif.) remains favorite. . . . N.M. Gov. **Gary Johnson** (R.) announces support for legalizing heroin.

■ After loss of Mars spacecraft by confusing English and metric measurements, NASA's **Carl Pilcher** tries to reassure: "There's nothing we can do about that. We'll live through it. . . . Then we'll wow them again." . . . So that's why they call it "The Company"! CIA announces it has started Silicon Valley venture-capital firm to guarantee its agents are tech savvy. . . . Office of Thrift Supervision budgets $50,000 for 10th-anniversary celebrations, including a jazz brunch cruise down the Potomac River for employees. . . . Ku Klux Klan tries to sponsor public radio's *All Things Considered* program on University of Missouri station. . . . University of Virginia's governing board signals it will end use of race in application process. . . . Pizza Hut buys ad on side of Russian rocket scheduled to launch space-station capsule in November.

■ Red China adopts slogans for 50th anniversary, including: "Long live great Marxism, Leninism, **Mao Zedong** thought, and **Deng Xiaoping** theory." . . . China sends only $160,000 to aid earthquake relief in Taiwan, compared to $50 million Taiwan gave to mainland flood victims in recent years. . . . Web site details persecution of Catholics in China: www.freechurchforchina.org. . . . Libyan dictator **Muammar Qaddafi** publicly abandons cause of Arab unity, calling it an "illusion and mirage." . . . Israel permitted to reopen Mossad office in Amman, Jordan, empty since failed assassination of Hamas leader two years ago. . . . In survey of jobs won by graduates at top companies, Oxford University falls behind Cambridge, Leeds, Durham, Manchester, University College of London, and University of Nottingham, says *Chronicle of Higher Education*. . . . Fox-hunt fans turn out 15,000 at event protesting British prime minister **Tony Blair**'s proposal to ban the sport.

■ Sen. Ted Kennedy (D., Mass.) tells *Boston Globe* he plans to run for reelection in both 2000 and 2006. Says son Rep. **Patrick Kennedy** (D., R.I.), "I can't see him enjoying a life of leisure." Oh really? **NR**

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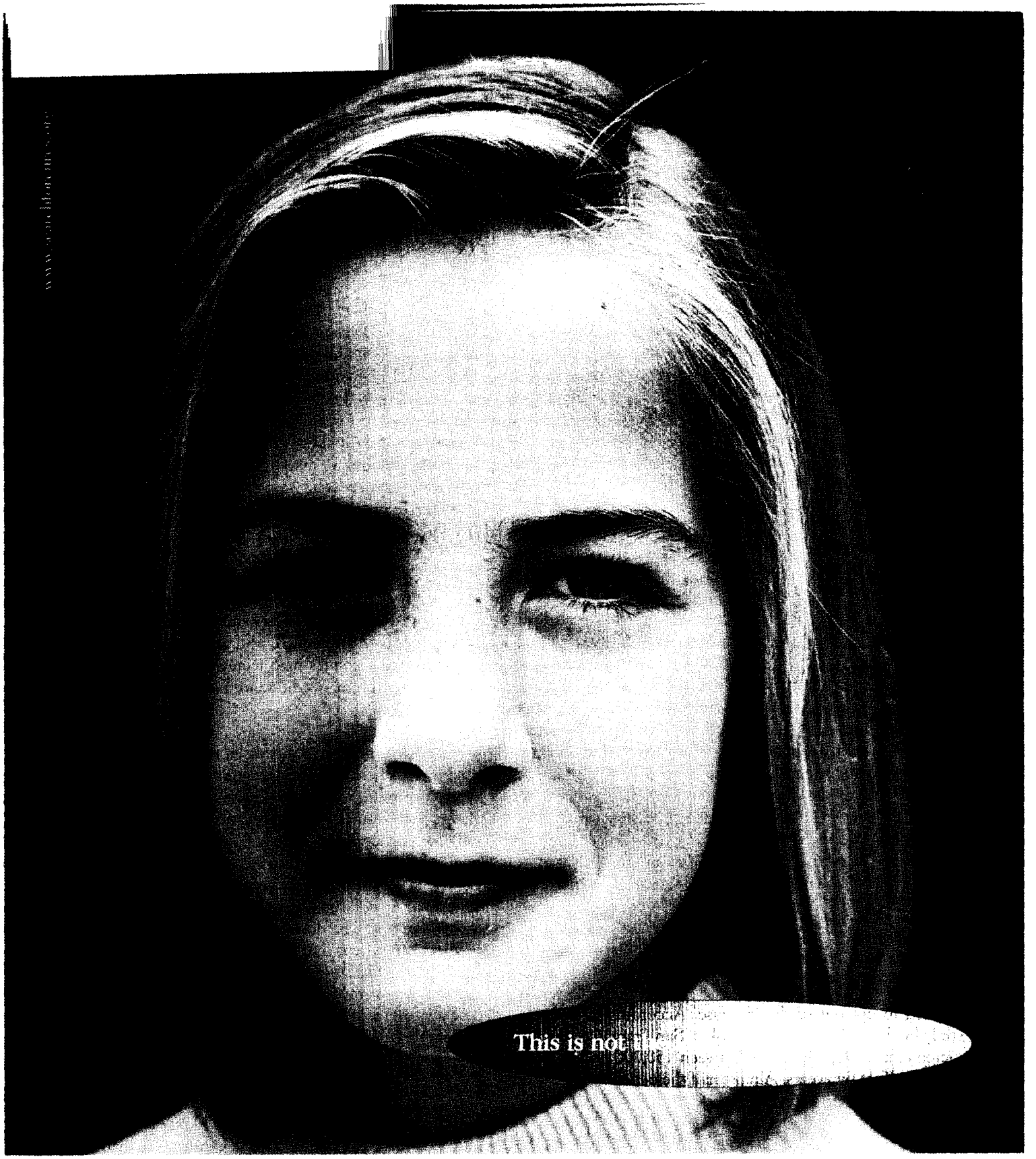

It's the face of Rachel Course, cartwheeler, violinist and an extraordinary kid. She has cystic fibrosis (CF), but it doesn't stop her from doing the things she wants to do. New medicines discovered by pharmaceutical company researchers have helped Rachel, and thousands of other CF patients, go from a life of little hope to one filled with dreams for the future. There isn't a cure for CF yet, but America's pharmaceutical companies get closer every day. So a little girl like Rachel can keep on doing what she does best. Being a kid.

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THE WEEK

■ BERLIN, 1983—National Socialist Germany threw itself a 50th birthday party in Berlin last week, which climaxed with a mammoth rally, at which pictures of founding führer Adolf Hitler (1889–1969) were prominently displayed. National Socialism has a mixed legacy. Its prosperity, military might, and advanced technology were on display in Berlin (Germany's moon landing was much celebrated). But human-rights questions continue to dog the regime: Unregistered churches are persecuted, conditions in factories often approach slave labor, and dissidents in the French and Russian provinces continue to be arrested. "Germany is a dynamic but proud society," said former president Hamilton Fish, "and we can best encourage change by offering our example, and treating it with respect."

■ Pity the House Republicans. Their decision to extend payments from the earned income credit over twelve months instead of making them in one lump sum may have been politically clumsy (hence the "backs of the poor" rebuke from George W. Bush—see p. 18). But Republicans resorted to this one-time gimmick, which was not an actual cut in the program, because they figured it was the only way to avoid dipping into the Social Security surplus they had declared off limits. Now, with their meager five-vote majority, Republicans will engage in a nearly hopeless fight to scale back every spending bill over the objections of Democrats, wayward Republican appropriators, and every interest group in town. Bush should lend his support. Or does he hope to win his campaign on the backs of congressional Republicans?

■ Bush also endorsed Democratic demands that the minimum wage be raised from $5.15 to $6.15, so long as states are allowed to opt out of the increase. According to a recent study by the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, the last increase, in 1996, eliminated between 150,000 and 457,000 jobs in its first two years. Almost half the benefits of the hike went to families making more than three times the poverty level. The governor needs to decide whether his "compassionate conservatism" seeks to help poor people or merely to use them for posturing.

■ Hidden in Bush's latest speech on education is a wonderful stick of dynamite. He would allow parents or grandparents to put up to $5,000 per year in "education savings accounts," from which they could withdraw money, tax-free, to pay for "tuition payments, or books, or tutoring, or transportation—whatever students need most." If enacted, this proposal would be a momentous advance for school choice. And since it applies to public-school expenses, it has wider appeal than most school-choice proposals. In the rest of his speech, Bush made it clear that his administration would regard decentralization and high standards as complementary goals. States would be required to test students regularly, for example, but the choice of test would be up to them. The results for each school would be publicized, giving information to participants in a blooming marketplace. Having criticized Bush's last education speech, we will give credit where it is due: Bush has lately been more daring and imaginative than anyone in Congress.

■ Dan Quayle quit the presidential race, realizing that even if he did well in New Hampshire, he would not have the funds to capitalize on it. His campaign was from beginning to end gracious, principled, and animated by ideas beyond the ken of the comics who jeered at him or the reporters who dismissed him. We hope we have not heard the last of him.

■ Jesse Ventura, who wants to be reincarnated as a 38 DD bra, recently held forth in, appropriately enough, *Playboy*. He thinks organized religion is a "sham" for the "weak-minded." (Later, a spokesman explained Ventura meant only to belittle religious conservatives.) He believes President Kennedy was killed by the "military-industrial complex" because JFK wanted to pull out of Vietnam. Ventura's appeal, like that of his Reform party colleague Ross Perot, has always been that he tells it like it is. The downside of candid candidates with no political expertise is that their candor is usually a symptom of a general flakiness—amusing in a bartender or businessman, less so in a governor. In this sense, Ventura is a perfect fit for his party. No word yet on who he thinks planned to disrupt the wedding of Perot's daughter.

■ Warren Beatty's speech to the Southern California branch of Americans for Democratic Action, testing the waters for a presidential run, drew 150 reporters. "His is the only populist voice I know that can attract media attention," said producer Norman Lear. That's one thing about millionaire movie-star populists—they do attract media attention.

■ A first: The Clinton administration lost a floor vote over a judicial nomination. In a 54–45 vote, Missouri supreme-court justice Ronnie White was rejected as a federal district-court judge. The vote was a victory for Missouri senator John

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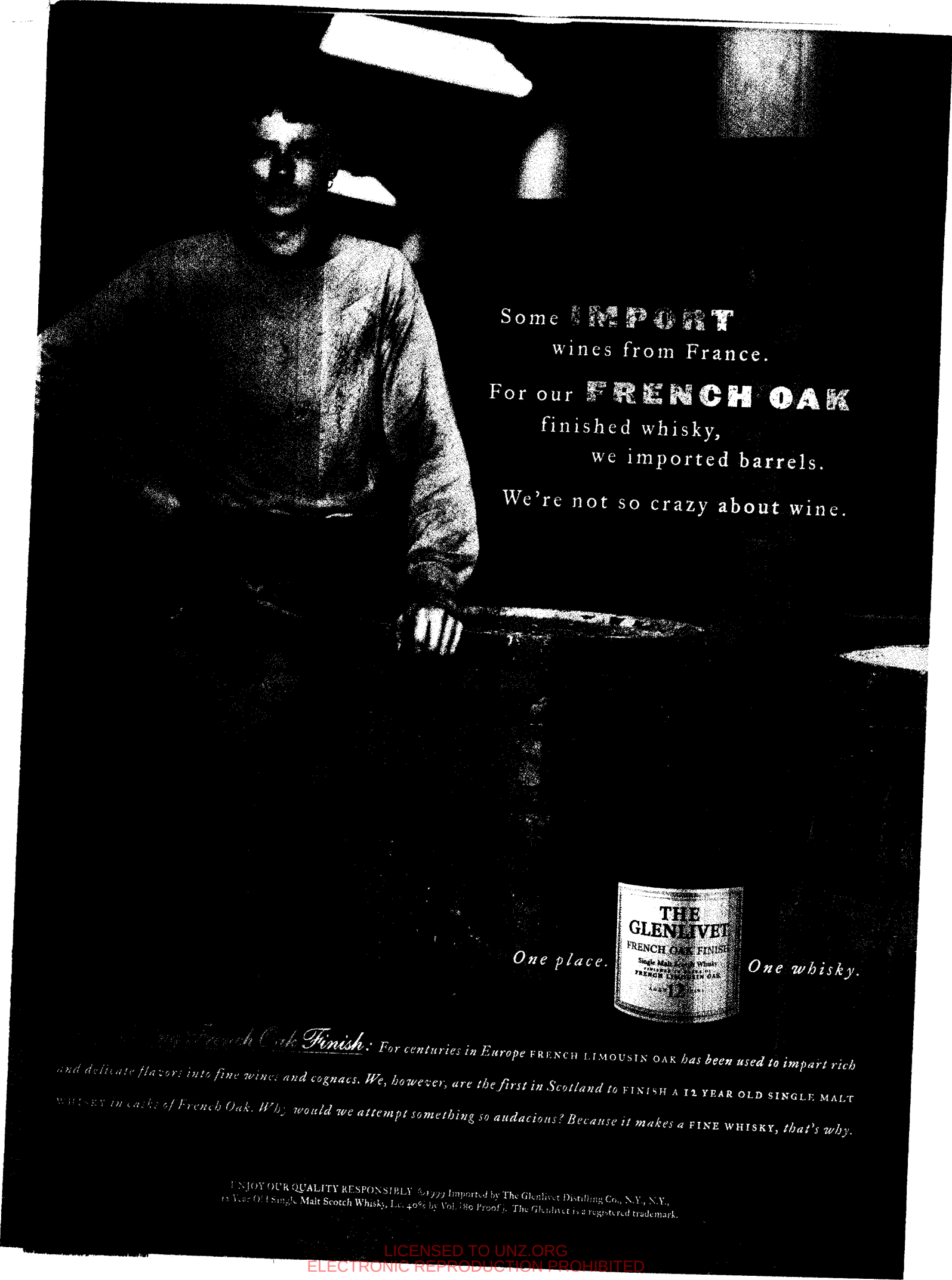

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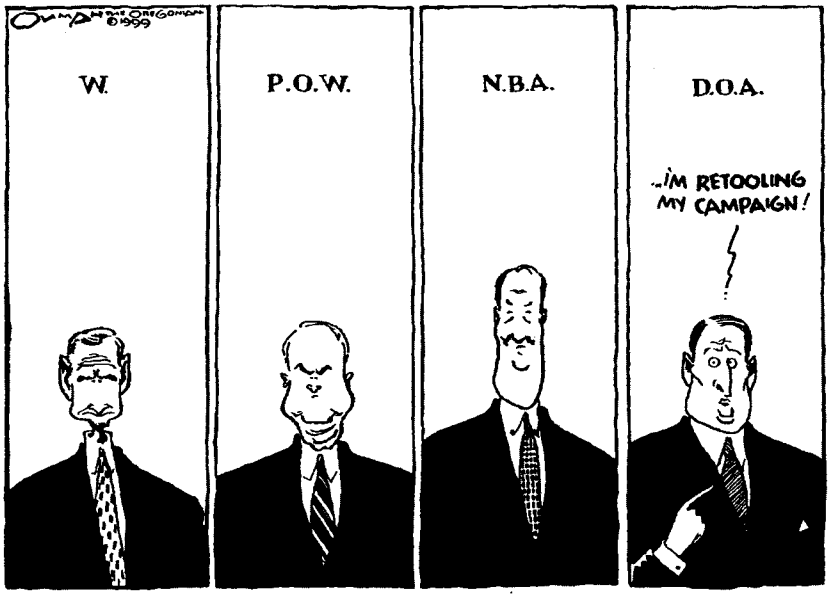
Ashcroft, as well as for law-enforcement groups troubled by White's record of trying to block executions. Their opposition eventually swayed Orrin Hatch and Arlen Specter, who had voted for White in the Judiciary Committee but went against him on the floor. After the vote, Vermont Democrat Pat Leahy played the race card, saying that he hoped there was no "color test" for nominations (White is black, which many of the senators did not know). New York Democrat Chuck Schumer was reduced to complaining that White had been rejected "so hastily." Normally Democrats complain about the "unconscionable delays" caused by conservative obstruction, and, indeed, they had retailed that complaint about the White nomination, made 27 months ago. If Republicans are worried about demagoguery such as Leahy's, there is a simple solution: As we have argued before, they should oppose all of Clinton's nominees—regardless of race or anything else.

■ The House voted 254-172 for South Carolina Republican Lindsey Graham's bill to make it a crime to kill or injure a fetus in the course of committing a federal offense. The *Washington Post* summed up the logic of the bill's opponents: "The law cannot hold, at once, that a fetus is fully human for the purpose of federal criminal law yet simultaneously subject to being aborted as a matter of legally enforceable maternal right. Nobody, after all, has a constitutional right to kill another person—so to the extent that this society has decided to permit abortion, it cannot also offer explicit legal protection to the unborn." The flaw in the *Post*'s analysis is that "this society" never explicitly decided to permit abortion, and certainly never decided that fetuses are not human persons. The Supreme Court alone did that. The public's attitude toward the unborn does not admit of crisply logical formulations. The real purpose of this bill is to nudge the public toward the eventual realization that a society that offers legal protection to the unborn cannot continue to allow abortion. Until then, the public will muddle along—which, in a democracy, is its right.



■ In April 1997, attorney general Janet Reno told the Senate Judiciary Committee that "the federal government does not have an independent cause of action" against the tobacco companies. The law has not changed since then, but the Justice Department has filed suit anyway—the Clinton administration realizes it does not need a cause of action. The point, as with the earlier state lawsuits, is to change policy toward the tobacco industry without having to persuade a single member of Congress, or to respect constitutional limits. The industry will "voluntarily" accept new regulations and censor themselves in order to avoid catastrophic damages. So the merits of the case may not matter. Indeed, the Justice Department has to be hoping that they do not. Long after the hazards of smoking received wide attention, the federal government continued not only to permit the tobacco trade but to profit from it through taxes and to participate in it by distributing cigarettes to servicemen. Today it makes more money from the cigarette business than the tobacco companies do. For decades, the government has forced taxpayers to subsidize other people's health care, knowing that some of those people would smoke and get sick as a result. Now the administration wants to blame the tobacco companies for that policy, and it wants to pretend that smoking imposes a net cost on taxpayers, even though economic analyses show otherwise. It does not want to be inconvenienced by the fact that people know smoking is risky but choose to do it anyway. The tobacco companies are not the only ones guilty of fraud.

■ For two years, Democrats repeatedly demanded that the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty be allowed to come to the Senate floor for a vote. Then, majority leader Trent Lott and Foreign Relations Committee chairman Jesse Helms threatened to do just that, confident that the treaty would fall well short of the two-thirds majority necessary for ratification. So the Democrats have been backtracking and squirming, seeking either to delay the vote or to find some parliamentary device to send it, still alive, back to committee. In any case, the treaty deserves to be defeated.

■ Dr. Bernadine Healy, Elizabeth Dole's successor as president of the American Red Cross, told an astonished Charlie Gibson on ABC's *Good Morning America* that U.S. aid to Taiwan's earthquake victims had to go through Beijing, or at least be approved by Beijing. This caused an uproar among many Chinese-Americans and congressmen. Red Cross chapters across the U.S.—and even officials of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva—promptly disavowed the Healy doctrine. Meanwhile, China

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If a credit crunch hits again this year, we'll make sure it has the same impact on home buyers as last year: none.

In the fall of 1998, worldwide financial markets melted down. Triple A-rated companies and sovereign nations alike found credit more expensive, if they could get credit at all. While this was going on, American home buyers were buying and refinancing homes at record levels with historically low mortgage rates. How come the average home buyer had it so good while wealthy companies and sovereign nations didn't?

For over 30 years as a private company, Fannie Mae has been there, lowering mortgage rates and expanding homeownership. In fact, at the peak of last year's credit crunch, consumers whose mortgages were financed by Fannie Mae were saving more than $26,800 over the life of their loans, compared to those whose loans weren't financed by Fannie Mae. Right now the savings we're passing on to home buyers who get a Fannie Mae mortgage averages about $19,000.

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Wooing Big Labor

Bill Bradley mobilizes jocks
From Magic Johnson to old crocks,
And always wears those orange socks;
Al Gore, who bombed in that canoe
And stumps like someone in a pew,
Is stuck with Clinton's retinue.

—W. H. von Dreele

showed off its version of "strategic ambiguity" by denying overflight rights to other countries flying relief supplies to Taipei, adding hours to the delivery time. Beijing also continued to threaten to use force to punish Taiwan for its flirtation with independence. What Taiwan needs relief from most is a bullying mainland.

■ Strobe Talbott, deputy secretary of state, is one of those great experts and clever idiots who always found some reason for saying that things weren't as bad as they looked in the former Soviet Union. Since those days, Yeltsin's Russia has been for him the best of all possible Russias. Until now. The Kremlin holds the Chechens responsible for recent terror attacks in Moscow and elsewhere, and good old Boris has begun to bomb them hard, not for the first time either. Ten thousand Chechens have been rounded up in Moscow and deported back to their native Caucasus. In a finger-wagging speech at Harvard, Talbott has urged Russia to avoid falling back on stereotypes and "blaming people of darker complexion." "Wisdom and restraint" are his watchwords. This is what he calls "a moment of truth for the new Russian state." The collapse of his own absurdly benign stereotypes about Russia and Russians should finally be initiating a similar "moment of truth" in the deputy secretary's head.

■ U.N. secretary general Kofi Annan has announced, in a series of speeches and articles, that only the U.N. Security Council can authorize and legitimize the use of force—by the U.S., NATO, or anyone else. Under the Annan doctrine, the American Constitution would in effect be stashed away somewhere while Russia and China enjoyed a veto over any proposed U.S. military action. This is such extraordinary overreach that even the Clinton administration is balking, if belatedly. The Clinton team, after all, came into office trumpeting its "assertive multilateralism" (i.e., devotion to the U.N.) and love of "humanitarian interventions" only remotely related to American national interests. While the war in Kosovo—brazenly prosecuted by the U.S. and NATO without the prior approval of Jiang Zemin—was a brief exception, many in the administration basically agree with Annan. So do most of our allies. The secretary general's mad dream only takes their airy sentimentality to its logical, and parlous, conclusion.

■ Thomas L. Friedman, the gifted *New York Times* columnist and reporter, has given us a whopping example of moral equivalence. In Cuba, he wrote, "the only hope is probably 'biological reform,' i.e., the passing away of the charismatic revolutionary generation . . . and its virulent Cuban exile opponents in Florida . . ." At this juncture, we can only sigh.

■ Different sports have evolved different and distinctive manners. European soccer fans apparently think murder is acceptable; "I'll moider da bum" is kosher in boxing; we are not current on the latest practices in the World Wrestling Federation. But golf is another world, almost Trappist in its silences, honor-bound in its rules and traditions. Spectators stop breathing when a competitor addresses the ball—which is why the behavior of American spectators and even American competitors at the recent Ryder Cup matches against the European team was such a violation. Persons in the crowd harassed the European golfers. American players riotously and maniacally whooped it up over an important putt while their opponents were still playing. This was yahoo time at the Ryder Cup, and shameful.

■ Of the many roles of George C. Scott's long career, the one that touched a nerve was his portrayal of George S. Patton. In the midst of the Vietnam War, Scott's portrayal of an American warrior was startling. In those grim days, high and mainstream culture believed, as C. S. Lewis sarcastically put it, that "peace matters more than honour and can be preserved by jeering at colonels." Military men were assumed to be murderers or lunatics. (Scott had given a classic depiction of the latter as Gen. Buck Turgidson in *Dr. Strangelove*.) *Patton* did not blunt its hero's rough and weird edges, but Scott essentially portrayed a brave and zealous man doing a job that only the brave and zealous can do. R.I.P.

■ We pause for a commercial message: The latest sitcom of NR contributing editor Rob Long is on the air. It is *Love & Money*, and it appears on Fridays at 8:30 P.M. on CBS. Mr. Long is, of course, our "Letter from Al" parodist. His show is winning raves—to the utter non-surprise of any reader of NR.

■ We have a new world champion when it comes to university names. It has come to our attention that, in Libya, Tripoli U. has been renamed the University of the Martyrs of the U.S. Aggression. Congratulations to Libya, for unseating the previous champion—the Soviet Union, whose academy of higher education for Asian Marxists bore the unforgettable name "University of the Toilers of the East."

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THE REAGAN LEGACY

The Morris Scandal

THE techniques employed by Edmund Morris in *Dutch* (see John O'Sullivan's review, p. 33, as well as additional articles) were certainly justified from the standpoint of p.r. Instead of a weighty biography, weighted still further by the adjective "authorized," Morris created a scandal. The pro-ing and conning of pundits is worth half a dozen book tours.

Morris's method is called postmodern, but it owes as much to the stylistic pioneering of Truman Capote, Tom Wolfe, Norman Mailer, and other New Journalists of the Sixties and Seventies. These writers covered events by inserting themselves into their stories and (at their best) using their point of view as a prism of observation and discovery. Morris upped the ante by inserting himself into events that occurred before he was born. His storytelling makes him vulnerable to the fate of George Washington's first biographer, Mason Locke Weems. Weems identified himself on his title page as the parson of Mt. Vernon parish (there is no such parish), and he made up a number of moral tales, most famously that of the cherry tree. But Weems had also done a good deal of homework, interviewing the first president's friends and family. Resenting his embroideries, later generations of historians disdained both his book and his point of view.

Where will *Dutch* figure in the battle over Reagan's reputation? Morris admired the man hugely, but also found him difficult to grasp. This difficulty pushed him towards his technical innovations and also produced passages of frustrated scorn. What made Reagan so hard for a late-20th-century intellectual to get?

Two qualities are strange to us, and not obviously compatible with each other. One is Reagan's simplicity. It is hard for many to imagine a successful and powerful man who held a few simple ideas, in public and private; who seemed so straightforward and was what he seemed. Reagan was also an actor, in life as well as on screen. His liberal despisers took that to be a sign of his shallowness and his limitations. Earlier ages knew that enacting the role of one's self is a way of maintaining consistency of character. Each man or woman can be a character actor.

Ronald Reagan found his view of the world early in life—he added information, never principles—and he developed a persona for expressing and projecting it. How simple. And how hard—even harder than writing a biography.

GORE'S BAD WEEK

Tony Coelho, who chairs the campaign,
Possibly dabbled in legerdemain,
Cooking—or maybe just fudging—some books;
Anyway, Al's got to care how it looks
Lest the malaise known as Clinton Fatigue
Tug at his polls and encourage intrigue.

—W. H. VON DREELE

CAMPAIGN 2000

Gore Fatigue

IN politics, the rich usually get richer. George W. Bush is ahead of the pack because he is ahead; the notion that he is a winner has become self-fulfilling. Al Gore, on the other hand, is losing because he is seen as a loser. The polls showing that Bush would trounce Gore are causing Democrats to flock to Bill Bradley. That Gore cannot win was indeed the stated rationale of New York senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan for endorsing Bradley. The fact that Bradley has raised more money than Gore this summer must be read as a vote of no confidence in Gore by Democratic donors.

Now Bradley is closing in on Gore in polls of New Hampshire Democrats. Gore, in response, has moved his campaign from the capital of America to the capital of Tennessee. The main effect is likely to be to disrupt his campaign, wasting crucial weeks. Gore remains a child of Washington, thoroughly beholden to its assumptions. It is in D.C., after all, that this type of transparent anti-Beltway positioning is thought to impress the rubes in flyover country. If the Beltway says that gun control is a winning issue, Gore will embrace it. If the Beltway says that his problem is that he is "boring" and "stiff," he will raise his rhetoric to a maniacal pitch and send his wife out to brag about their sex life. If the Beltway flatters his debating skills—based on his triumphs over an irritable Ross Perot and an ill-prepared Jack Kemp—he will challenge Bradley to a series of debates.

He may be blessed once again in his opponent. Debates could help Gore, not because he is a good debater, but because Bradley cannot afford to be pinned down. There is a reason Bradley's campaign speeches dwell on the importance of "a young girl's smile or a little boy's first handshake or a grandmother's pride": His left-wing staff and strategy are at war with his moderate-liberal record and base (in a Pew poll taken in May, the public regarded Bradley as more moderate than Gore).

Where Clinton and Gore are New Democrats, however, Bradley is a *New York Times* Democrat. The reflexive paternalism toward the poor and minorities, reflected in opposition to welfare reform; the uncompromising support of abortion; the obsession with procedural fixes for political problems, such as campaign-finance reform—all are fixtures of the *Times* editorial page. At the same time, Bradley, like the *Times*, is too knowledgeable about economics to give the Left what it really craves, which is protectionism.

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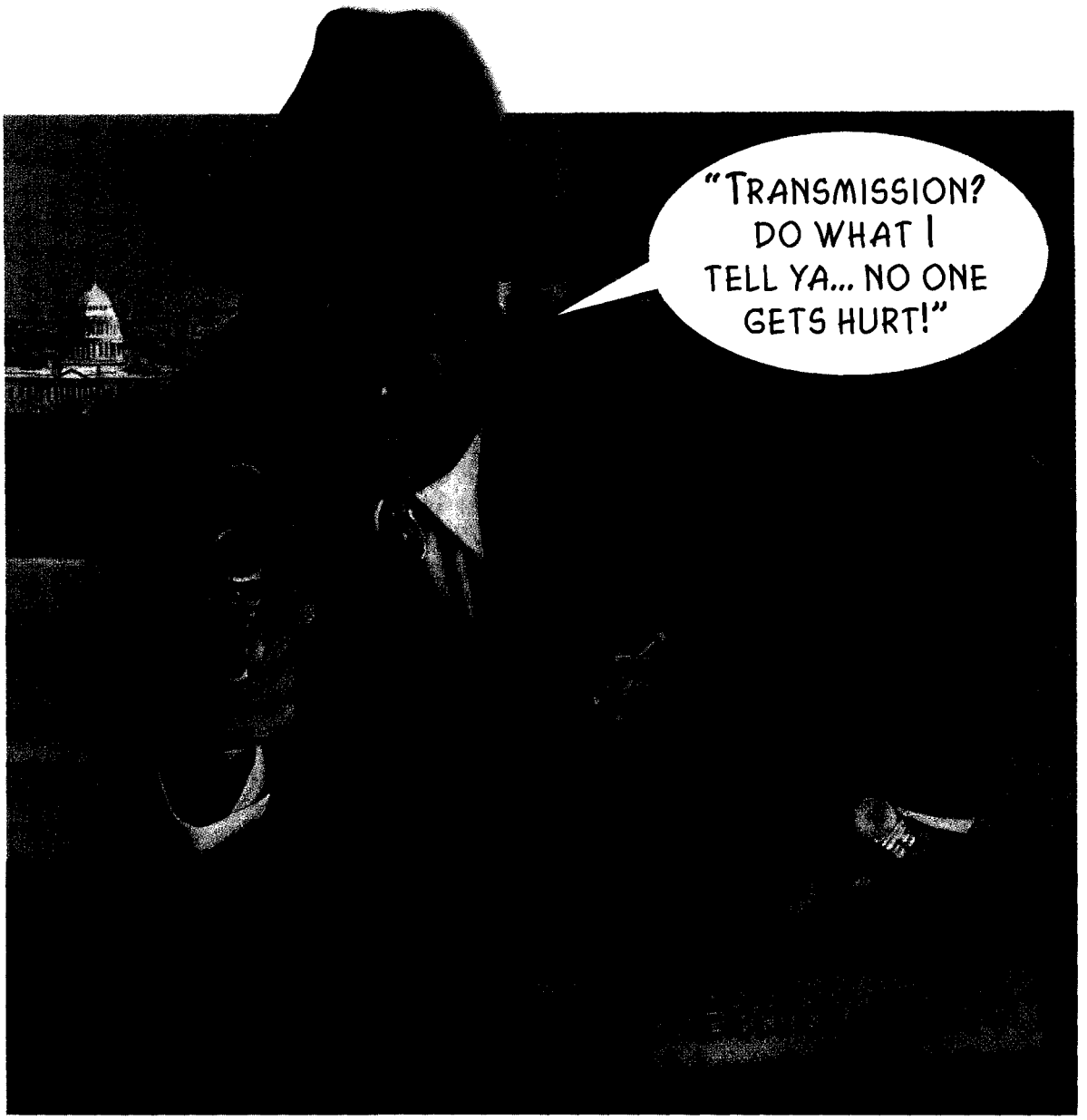
TRANSMISSION — WHO'LL RUN THE SYSTEM?

MEET THE REGULATOR



Congress is on the verge of handing vast and unfettered new policing authority over America's vital electricity TRANSMISSION SYSTEM to a little-known and often unaccountable federal regulatory agency—the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The bloating of this agency into the warden of the nation's electricity grid should be alarming to all.

FERC's new precinct will be composed of regional transmission organizations (RTOs), entities that will control transmission and even the distribution of electricity. FERC will decide how many RTOs to create... what these RTOs look like... who is in them... how they will be governed... what they will do and when they will do it. Utilities of all types and sizes will be marshaled into strange transmission lock-ups by regulatory fiat... with little chance for appeal. More importantly, the States will be pushed to the sidelines!

Congress should instead consider measures which encourage the voluntary formation of RTOs and seek a market-based solution... not more heavy-handed federal intervention. Unleashing a torrent of federal regulation in the name of "deregulation" dishonors the goals of consumer choice and market competition.

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Conservatives cannot do much to affect the outcome of the Democratic race. Some Republicans hope that Gore wins, regarding him as easier to beat than Bradley. That conclusion is speculative. But whatever direction partisan interest points, it would serve the national interest for the troglodyte Left—which blocked welfare reform for so long and still poisons our race relations—to be marginalized. Which is to say, for Bill Bradley to be vanquished, even if Al Gore must be the victor.

DEFENSE

The Other Military Issue

NATIONAL defense has emerged as a major issue for Republican presidential candidates, and not a moment too soon. As George W. Bush pointed out in his recent speech on the subject, Army recruiting is at a 20-year low, thousands of members of the armed forces are on food stamps, shortages of equipment are common, and defense spending has fallen to dangerous levels. The first step toward righting these wrongs should be an increase in military spending, even if that means domestic programs must be cut or that debt must be incurred.

Republicans have reached a consensus on the need for missile defense; the topic was addressed both by Bush and by Elizabeth Dole in her own recent speech. The two candidates recognized that the ABM Treaty of 1972 is an obstacle to the development of a defensive system. Bush proposed to negotiate changes to it with Russia, and if necessary to take advantage of the treaty's provision that a signatory may withdraw from it six months after announcing an intention to do so. Mrs. Dole went even farther, promising to "ignore [the treaty] as invalid."

Both candidates spoke of national strategy, too: Dole emphasized the need for firmness, Bush the need for modernization and more focused commitments overseas. These were serious speeches—as was an earlier one by John McCain—and thus provided a welcome contrast with the defense policies of the present administration.

But they are not enough. To concentrate exclusively on questions of strategy and readiness is to take care of the military's mind and body, but not its spirit. The assault on military culture, which has gathered force in the Clinton years, is a major contributor to low morale. The service with the best recruiting record, the Marines, is the one that has most avidly guarded its traditional culture. In the other services, gender integration has brought reduced physical standards, seemingly monthly scandals, and pervasive dishonesty. Administration officials, ignorant of the military's nature, often argue that it should adjust its mores to society at large.

Yet Republicans, presidential candidates and congressmen, are not defending military culture. McCain, who would have enormous credibility on the issue, has not spoken up and has sometimes fallen for the administration line. When a commission headed by Nancy Kassebaum Baker unanimously recommended that men and women be separated in boot camp—even Deval Patrick, Clinton's former civil-rights chief, concurred—some Hill Republicans promptly began to undermine it. Bush, to his credit, has indicated he would implement the recommendation, but also that he would not "turn back the clock" more generally.

It is a pity that even conservative critics who fault the GOP for stingy defense budgets are ignoring the cultural issue. It is reasonable to fear that this issue cannot be raised without crowding out other pressing military concerns. But a conservative defense agenda must include a rollback of cultural liberalism in the military if it is to respond to the armed forces' requirements—and to common sense.

CULTURE WATCH

Our Lady of Brooklyn

AT the height of the controversy over the "Sensation" exhibit in the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the *New York Times* ran a picture of a desecrated Madonna. Not Chris Ofili's image, decorated with elephant dung and snippets of pornographic photographs, but a statue in the home of the Roman Catholic bishop of Dili, in East Timor. Departing Indonesian militiamen had demolished the house and destroyed the statue's face and hands. In their wake, shaken East Timorese had gathered at the spot. One old woman was shown kissing the ground before the Virgin's feet. That slice of real pain and piety shrank the Brooklyn controversy to the tempest in a toilet that it is. Still, the "Sensation" exhibit raised some important questions.

If art is to be supported by government funds, then the government will decide what it chooses to fund. In democratic societies, that means the people's elected representatives have final say, not the art world. Yeats, in a caustic poem flaying the taste of modern Ireland, wrote that a noble art patron of the Renaissance "sent no runners to and fro/That he might learn the shepherds' will." True enough. But modern America is governed by pols and voters, not by dukes

HIGH-TARIFF PAT

Should you party with Buchanan
Or his sister, on a toot,
Please remember Mr. Hawley
And his sidekick, Mr. Smoot;
Once the tariff bill they'd sponsored
(Hoover signed it) hit the fan,
Eleanor was writing columns
In the White House with That Man.

—W. H. VON DREELE

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and counts. He who pays the piper calls the tune, and avant-garde pipers cannot expect uninterrupted infusions of government pay.

Meanwhile, the avant-garde cycle of incomprehension, rejection, and ultimate acceptance has been so accelerated that it scarcely exists. Impressionist painters formed the Salon des Refusés because their work was rejected by established tastemakers. Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* was greeted by a riot. In Brooklyn, *tout le monde* closed ranks around Ofili's dungfest and its friends—the sliced cows, the pickled shark. Outsider art vaults instantly to stardom; the unshockable bourgeoisie sucks up every provocation.

Like shock art, unbelief now sets lower intellectual and stylistic standards for itself. An old-time Deist like Thomas Paine jeered at the Virgin Birth—"a young woman . . . debauched by a ghost"—yet considered it a doctrine that required argument. A turn-of-the-century atheist like Henry Adams felt the psychological and aesthetic force of a faith he could not share ("very childlike, very foolish, very beautiful and very true—as art, at least"). Now a dauber ratchets up a canvas with porno and excrement, in the hope that Charles Saatchi, his patron and agent, can get a better price.

We hope you enjoyed the show.

■ NOTES & ASIDES ■

■ To: Faith McFadden
From: WFB

The anniversary of Jim's death is upon us, and I know that many of our readers, even those who aren't current subscribers to his/your epochal quarterly, would like to know how it is faring. Could you update us?

Dear Bill: Yes, so far the *Human Life Review* is doing well; the latest issue is in the mail, and we're hard at work looking for new subscribers. With our skeletal but dedicated staff we've also resurrected Jim's monthly newsletter *catholic eye*. Anyone interested in either publication may contact us here at 215 Lexington Avenue—same address as NR. So we are managing to carry on Jim's legacy—somewhat to our surprise, and probably to his, too.

Love, Faith

James Patrick McFadden
1930–1998

■ Estimado Sr. Buckley: Letter-writer Frank Belsito (July 12) suggests changing the root of the word "cognoscenti" from *cogno* to the Spanish four-letter word *coño* (a favorite expletive of Cubans and Spaniards, denoting female genitalia).

Actually, given the state of knowledge, understanding, and wisdom among our intelligentsia these days, that's fitting. Feminazis in particular won't like it, which is another point in its favor.

But that's not why I'm writing. Señor Belsito's suggestion was subtly put. He doesn't actually spell out the four-letter word, and from your reply it appears he threw a curve ball right by you.

Surely your Spanish is not the problem.

Could it be that you need to get out more?

Atentamente,
John S. Mason Jr.
Alexandria, Va.

Ah, Señor Mason, you have a sharp eye. All I can say is—you make your point, I should get around more. On the other hand, I did gad about recently in England, Norway, Denmark, Germany, Sweden, Finland, and Russia with 400 fellow NATIONAL REVIEW readers. What were *you* doing?

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: My father recommended your books and NATIONAL REVIEW as examples of eloquent writing. I am 13 years old and working on increasing my vocabulary. I would appreciate any suggestions you might have for doing so.

Sincerely,
Jenny Skelton
Grand Junction, Colo.

Dear Jenny: Stick with us. And you can always get a "Word of the Day" from our webpage, found at www.nationalreview.com.

Love, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: Reading your brother Reid's book, *Strictly Speaking*, I was struck by his admonition against using *none* as a plural. I had just read *your* book, *The Right Word*, in which you quote the *New York Public Library Style Book*: "*None* can be used with either a singular verb or a plural verb, but most grammarians and style manuals prefer the plural." Is this a clear contradiction between two Buckleys, both of whom are authorities? Whom to believe, sir?

Yours,
Bronwen Catherine McShea
Cornwall, N.Y.

Dear Ms. McShea: When in doubt, go for seniority. Reid is my distinguished *younger* brother.

Cordially, —WFB

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■ POLITICS ■

Bush *v.* Congress

Republican fratricide.

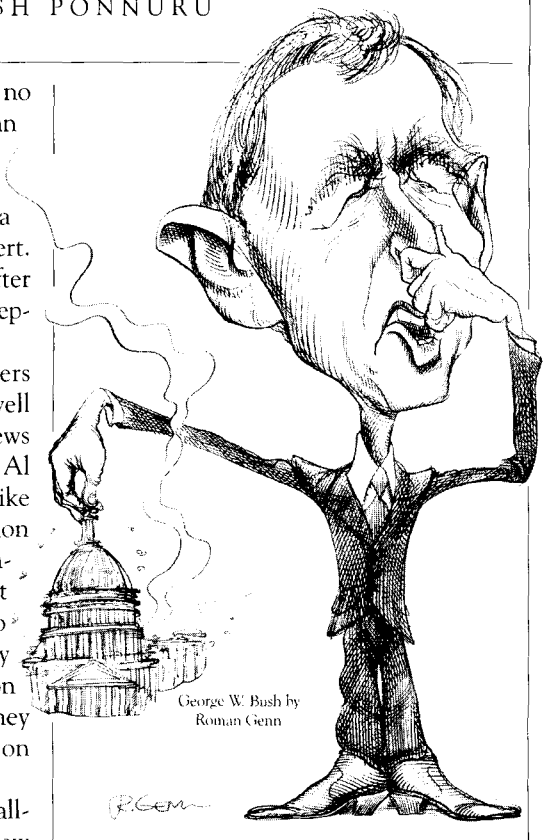
RAMESH PONNURU

THE Bush campaign swears it has no plans to run against the Republican Congress, but not everyone is convinced. "Is this triangulation or is this strangulation?" asks John Feehery, a spokesman for Speaker Denny Hastert. Feehery posed this question the day after the first real conflict between House Republicans and George W. Bush.

The way House Republican leaders see it, things had been going pretty well until Bush opened his mouth. The news was full of Democratic angst about Al Gore, who suddenly wasn't looking like a cinch for the presidential nomination and was retreating to the hills of Tennessee. The congressmen thought they were beginning to get through to the public with the message that they were trying to keep President Clinton from raiding Social Security funds. They had just launched an ad campaign on the theme.

The Social Security gambit was a fallback for the Republicans. They knew they didn't have the votes to stay within the spending caps both parties had agreed to two years ago. But they wanted, at least, to avoid touching Social Security. If Clinton wanted still more spending, the onus for raiding Social Security (or raising taxes) would be on him. To keep Social Security unmolested, however, required some sleight-of-hand. This included a GOP proposal to have the Earned Income Credit, a welfare program for low-income workers run by the IRS, hand out checks monthly instead of in a lump sum at the beginning of the year. That way, some of the spending would count as part of the budget for 2001.

Republican consultant Ed Gillespie explains the calculation: "My mother doesn't care if we do some advance appropriating. She cares if we dip into Social Security." Democrats attacked the EIC maneuver as stealing from the poor, because it delayed payments. But the Republican strategy appeared to be working. In a press conference on September 30, Clinton complained about the ads and pleaded for a bipartisan agreement either to raise taxes or to dip into the Social Security trust fund. So far, so good.



George W. Bush by Roman Genn

But GOP leaders on the Hill were about to get a lesson in how the interests of a party's presidential and congressional wings can diverge. Gov. Bush joined the attack. "I don't think they ought to balance their budget on the backs of the poor," he said. Driving the knife in deeper, he added that he thought Congress should obey the spending caps. (Where to find the money? The AP reporter, no doubt being mordant, continued: "[Bush] did not elaborate.") That afternoon, as a House committee prepared to vote on the EIC proposal, Democrat David Obey flung Bush's remark in the faces of surprised Republicans.

Then the press pounced. All year, the media had been looking for a Bush slap at Congress. Partly this was because reporters think Bush will win the presidency and want him to be to the left of the mean and nasty House Republicans. Also, the press needed to further its storyline of suave, popular, pragmatic governors battling the oafish ideologues of the House for the soul of the Republican party. Bush had before refused to take the bait. He had supported House Republicans in their votes on taxes and guns, albeit tepidly, and had been attacked by Clinton and Gore for doing so.

But the storyline at last fell into place. There was David Bonior, saying that this just proved the Republican Congress was out of touch, not only with the public but with Republicans outside Washington; there was Bill Clinton, saying he was "delighted to see" that Bush "finally had joined our position on this." John McCain inevitably followed Bush's lead. So the weekend talk shows now had something besides the Bradley–Gore race to chew over. One can imagine majority whip Tom DeLay's frustration. "It's obvious the governor's got a lot to learn about Congress," the Texas congressman snapped.

Even without Bush's intervention, the EIC proposal would probably have died. Senate Republicans were nervous about it, even the flinty Phil Gramm (though he didn't go public with his concerns). But dismay at Bush's comment was not confined to supporters of the EIC idea. The policy issue would be forgotten in three weeks, said a senior staffer for the Senate Republicans—but not the "fratricide."

The Bush camp describes the remark as a quick-draw response to a reporter's question. Congressional Republicans, by and large, believe it was a deliberate attempt by the candidate to distance himself from them. There have been conflicting stories about whether Bush was briefed on the EIC proposal in advance, but it had certainly been in the papers: He had plenty of time to tell the House leaders he would have to attack them if they persisted. The soundbite quality of Bush's remark also

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raised suspicions, as did the neatness with which it fit with Bush's campaign strategy. His "compassionate conservatism" requires the identification of uncompassionate conservatives to serve as foils. Bush had ducked the chance to repudiate Pat Buchanan, for fear of alienating Buchanan's supporters, but the Republican Congress is a safer target.

In fact, Bush could, if he wished, go much farther in attacking it. What's the worst Republican congressmen can do to him? When Bob Dole abandoned them on the issue of assault weapons in

■

Bush might suspect that a blundering GOP House is more trouble than it's worth.

■

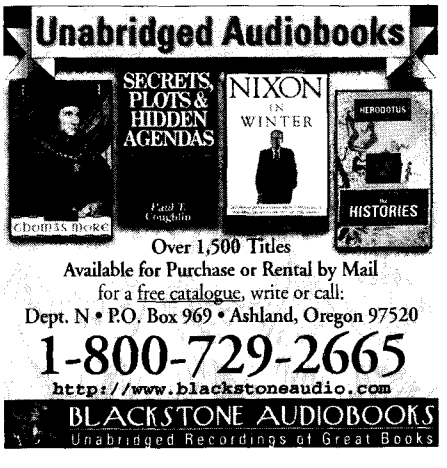
1996, they boosted their own reelection prospects and undercut him by passing welfare reform. But now they don't have the numbers to pass much of anything. Most of the Republicans have endorsed Bush; they could withdraw the endorsements, but that too just might serve Bush's strategy.

For his part, Bush would have to be superhuman not to occasionally wonder whether a constantly blundering Republican House is more trouble than it's worth. A President W. would need a Republican Senate to confirm his nominees and ratify his treaties. But a narrowly Democratic House, unable either to hide its liberalism or to act on it, would allow him to define himself advantageously in opposition. It would free him from responsibility for others' folly the same way the Republican Congress freed Clinton. Conversely, a Republican sweep in 2000 would set Bush up to take the blame for losing the House in 2002: The president's party tends to lose congressional seats in midterm elections.

Congressional Republicans are trying frantically to keep Gov. Bush's mind from wandering down this road. "The message we have to send the governor is if he's going to be president his job is going to be a lot easier if he has a Republican Congress," says Feehery, the Hastert spokesman. Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan decided to add another percentage point to their landslides rather than campaign for other Republicans, and paid a price during Watergate and Iran-contra. Then, too, the Senate might not stay Republican. A top Republican campaign official says he's worried about vulnerable seats in Delaware, Florida, Michigan, Minnesota, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington state. Only Nevada, Virginia, and arguably New York look like Republican pick-ups.

Clinton was elected in 1992 even as his fellow Democrats lost seats in Congress. Could something similar happen to Bush? Probably not. The circumstances of 1992 were unusual: There was a strong third-party campaign, and Republican congressional candidates benefited from a long-building conservative trend in public opinion (which Bush *père* was unable to exploit). Also, ticket-splitting has declined in this decade. If they don't run together, Bush and Congress could end up dragging each other down.

The Republican party has lined up with impressive speed behind Gov. Bush because he's supposed to be good for it. The congressional party's electoral strategy sometimes seems to consist of holding on tight to his coattails. (Never mind that he campaigned for few congressmen in 1996 and 1998.) But Bush is, quite reasonably, going to follow his own interests, as he sees them. The congressmen will have to refrain from giving him an incentive to attack them—and, perhaps, figure out a way to win their elections by themselves. **NR**



■ POLITICS II ■

The Brawlers

Ventura, Buchanan, and America.

LANCE MORROW

PAT BUCHANAN tells his people to "mount up and ride to the sound of the guns." (Buchanan likes bellicose locutions; men who actually served in the military and have experience of war—John McCain, say, or Colin Powell, or, for that matter, Jesse Ventura—do not use such expressions.) The question remains: Once Buchanan and his irregulars are mounted up, what flag are they fighting for? The Republican? The Reform party's? Merely . . . the wild-hair tribe of Pat Buchanan? What exactly is their business, once they get to the place where the guns are going off?

Buchanan may not know precisely, or much care. The noise and smoke are enough.

Buchanan cherishes an image of himself as gallant marauder in a cause achingly lost. This is a narcissistic nostalgia redramatized as underdog politics. Buchanan's personality, in its political projection, takes form as economic nationalism, as cultural indignation, and as a lashing defiance of elites. He has antecedents in American history, none of them especially savory. He manages to combine the swagger of George Custer at Little Big Horn with that of George Wallace chastising the pointy-heads. Buchanan clearly owes something to the voice from the Shrine of the Little Flower, Father Charles Coughlin, who lumped Franklin Roosevelt with "the godless capitalists, the Jews, Communists, international bankers, and plutocrats." Buchanan also sounds from

Mr. Morrow is an essayist for *Time* magazine and University Professor at Boston University.

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time to time like the old isolationist Joseph P. Kennedy.

The prospect of Buchanan's leaving the GOP and hijacking the earnest flakes of the Reform party sets up an interesting match between the only two vivid gladiators in a somewhat bloodless political field: Pat Buchanan and Jesse Ventura.

I subscribe to the theory that in order to understand a historical figure—or anyone else—you might profitably examine the world that he inhabited when he was 18 or 19 years old, the world as he saw it and understood it at the moment when he was emerging as an autonomous adult.

With this in mind, I reread Pat Buchanan's memoir of his youth in Washington, D.C., *Right from the Beginning*, then placed it alongside Ventura's manifesto-*cum*-confession, *I Ain't Got Time to Bleed*.

I was struck first by similarities in their experience—adolescent hell-raising, beer-guzzling, male bonding. In both, you pick up the vibration of truculent, blue-collar maleness. They went through some of the same rites of passage—learning to fight with their fists, getting into trouble with the law, making idiots of themselves. One grows almost wistful for that loutish learning process. American society sponsors fewer male rites of passage now. Military service, once universal, and socially useful in its subsidiary function of turning boys into men, has become anomalous.

Ventura, of course, is a highly original piece of work. Once you have waded through the rather earnest opening sections of *I Ain't Got Time to Bleed*, and noted The Body's principles, most of them sensible (Emersonian self-reliance, a touch of the libertarian, a winning distaste for ideology, a manly tolerance for nearly everyone's sexual predilections and weaknesses), you arrive at the entertainment portion of the program.

Of course, Ventura's candor—what he calls honesty is really performance art—comes at an unembarrassably confessional moment in American history, a hybrid of tabloid culture and twelve-step meeting in which people stand up and brag, with unpersuasive remorse: "Wudn't I BAD?! Wudn't I just AWFUL??????!" Ventura does this merrily. He describes the night that young Jim Janos (his real name) lost his virginity at age 16. He took the girl (whom he never saw again) to bed at a friend's house, rather than do it in the back seat of the car, because "I wanted it to be special." He relives his misadventures as a Navy SEAL in the Philippines, his (premarital) visits to Nevada's desert whorehouses, his nine months riding out of San Diego with a Mexican motorcycle gang called the Mongols, and his annual morons' drink-till-you-puke outings with the boys in the Minnesota forest. Wild oats sown by a working-class Prince Hal. Ventura even discloses that, to honor a SEAL tradition, he seldom wears underwear. When SEALs get together in a bar, someone, after a few pitchers of beer, is liable to yell, "Skivvy check!"—whereupon all SEALs present stand and drop their trousers to make sure no one is wearing underwear.

Jesse Ventura by Roman Genn

Pat Buchanan's memoir describes growing up in a large, tightly knit, and combative Scotch-Irish-German Catholic family, with a proud, strong, long-suffering father who wielded a strap and forced the boys to work out every day on the heavy bag. Buchanan and his brothers were beer-guzzlers, brawlers, and regular weekend wreckers of their father's cars. Buchanan says that the boys went through half a dozen Oldsmobiles between 1955 and 1962. On the night that the old man, head of a respected Washington accounting firm, had his auto insurance cancelled, he blew up at the boys at the dinner table. Chastened silence. Then Pat spoke up, quietly: "Pop, none of this would have happened if you didn't drive like a damned fool."

So much for similarities. The great difference between Ventura and Buchanan is the difference between the Fifties and the Sixties.

Buchanan is pure Fifties. Sex was awfully scarce in those days. At Gonzaga College High School, the Jesuit institution that Buchanan (Class of '56)—and, as it happens, I (Class of '58)—attended, we put our energy into studying Greek, playing basketball (which the Jesuits told us was the cure for "impure thoughts"), and learning how to drink a half a case of beer and still manage not to kill anyone on the way home. In the summer of '57, Buchanan and his cronies drove to the seaside Neverland of Ocean City, Maryland, to live on hot dogs and round-the-clock beer. "It was," wrote Buchanan, his prose misting over, "a great time to be alive."

Buchanan emerged from Gonzaga an authoritarian and dogmatist, possessing something of the Jesuit's fierceness—and delight—in argument. I cannot see that he has changed in the 40-odd years since then. About America he has instincts of a sometimes paradoxical dynamic: aggressively defensive, militantly wistful. To him, America in the Fifties was a golden age, never to come again, but always to be cherished as a model, a time of American power, American morality, a certain manliness and cleanliness. The sense of the loss of all that is what gives Buchanan his edge, his anger, his scorn, his rather unattractive zeal. It was the Sixties that ended his America. Buchanan hates the Sixties.

On the other hand, Jesse Ventura, now 48 years old, is an interestingly nutty improvisation on the Sixties. Ventura loves that decade and all the screaming, polychrome anarchy attendant thereto: the music, the sex, the

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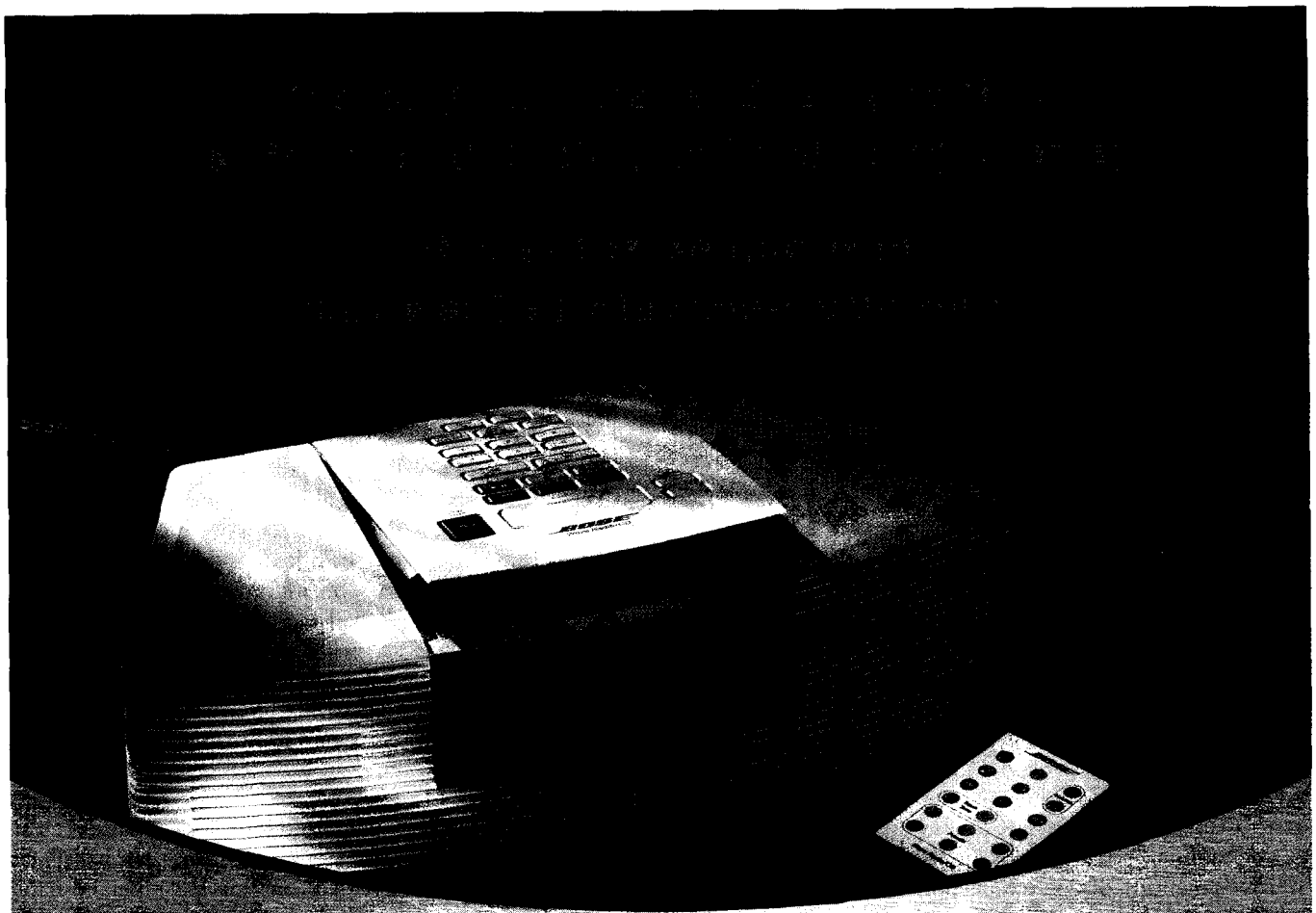

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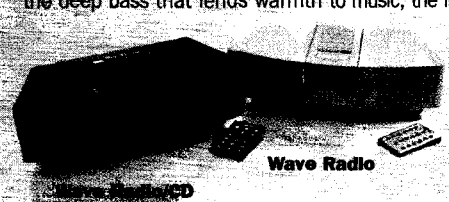

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drugs, the anti-establishment language. Ventura's impulses are fundamentally anti-authoritarian and, on the whole, rather generous. Ventura recites Sixties gospel as Buchanan never would: "That double standard was what caused the hippie rebellion: the hypocrisy that forced kids to go die in a war when those same kids weren't even allowed to vote against the people who sent them over there."

Buchanan, it may be, was formed by vertical, hierarchical America—a nation in which values were transmitted vertically, from father to son, down the generations. Ventura comes from the horizontal America brought in by the Baby Boom, a nation in which values are transmitted horizontally, across the vast sibling generation.

Ventura remains a crude American original and work-in-progress—therefore still difficult to judge. One can imagine him serving out the remainder of one term and then vanishing from public life, remembered only as a colorful aberration. Sometimes he says things so dumb and banal that it breaks your heart to think America's lowest common denominator has arrived in the governor's mansion of one of our more civilized states. (But then, Bill Clinton, who represents, so to speak, a more accomplished version of the lowest common denominator, brought us to similar heartbreak by way of Oxford and Yale Law.) Ventura's interview with *Playboy* magazine—in which he described religion as the refuge of the "weak-minded" and said John Kennedy may have been killed by a conspiracy of the military-industrial complex—was the sort of political mistake he cannot afford to make twice.

Yet if you hold Ventura up to a generous light, he still may have a sort of distant plausibility—in the most sympathetic rendering, as a citizen-governor with basically sound, decent, common-sense instincts, and integrity and civic courage. Maybe.

But no matter what light I hold Buchanan up to, I see an opportunist, a man who talks macho but never went to war, a "conservative" willing to sell off principles for $12 million in federal matching funds. I see a throwback who is giving the Fifties a bad name. **NR**

■ POLITICS III ■

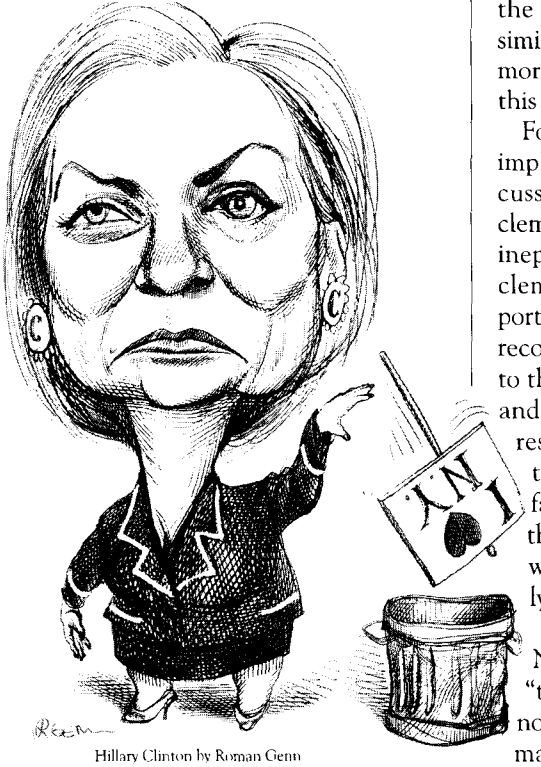
Yankee, Go Home

Why Hillary will quit the race.

KATE O'BEIRNE

MRS. Clinton said recently that there was only "a remote possibility" she would decide against running for the Senate from New York. That's her ego and ambition talking. When her instinct for self-preservation kicks in, Mrs. Clinton will bow out of the race, so as not to risk a devastating political and personal loss.

Think of what's at stake. Mrs. Clinton is different from other first-time candidates in that if she loses, she's washed up for good. In rejecting Hillary, New York—with a Democratic advantage of 2 million voters—would have rejected the Democratic party's most articulate liberal. The upright, ideologically passionate Hillary would have lost a state her husband carried twice. As Frank Sinatra might have said, If she can't make it there, she can't make it anywhere.



Hillary Clinton by Roman Genn

A defeat would snuff out the delusions of even her most ardent supporters, like the NOW official who believes that Hillary "is an icon to the women of the world." If their girl proved to be poison at the ballot box, the feminists' conviction that the wrong Clinton ran for the White House would be shattered beyond hope of repair.

Shattered, too, would be Hillary's own view of her partnership with Bill Clinton. She clearly believes that his political success has depended on her counsel, discipline, and drive. Without her, he'd be a middle-aged law professor chasing Arkansas coeds. Should she fail as a candidate in her own right, she will have to confront the unwelcome fact that her central contribution to his political success has been her pliant willingness to cover up his infidelities.

Those are the dire consequences of losing—and losing is in the cards if she runs. Her clumsy campaign has already revealed that she lacks her husband's knack for genial dissembling. Because he lets his audience in on his con, there's no expectation that he'll be on the level. When she's caught taking similar liberties with the truth, her air of moral superiority remains intact—and this rankles voters.

For example, she maintained—implausibly—that she had never discussed with her husband the issue of clemency for FALN terrorists. She then ineptly angered both sides in the clemency debate, first by being "supportive" of her husband's offer, then by recommending it be withdrawn, owing to the prisoners' tardy response. Finally, and typically, she ducked personal responsibility for the outraged reaction of the Puerto Rican activists she failed to inform. "I have to admit that the consultation process was not what it should have been," she primly announced.

A Republican congressman from New York marvels at Mrs. Clinton's "tone deafness." He explains, "She's not getting any mileage. In the FALN matter, she offended everyone, and

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brought the president into the campaign—which no Democrat wants."

Another example of Hillary's political clumsiness is her response to Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's decision to cut off funding to the Brooklyn Museum of Art because it is hosting an exhibit that is offensive to Catholics. She allowed that she wouldn't care to visit the controversial display, but thought it wrong to "penalize and punish [such] an institution." When I asked another New York GOP Congressman to explain her position, he laughed: "She's nailing down the Jerry Nadler vote," a reference to leftist art patrons in Congressman Nadler's district on Manhattan's Upper West Side.

On this issue, as on others, Mrs. Clinton's celebrity and cerebrum are no match for Giuliani's home-court advantage. The mayor understands the outrage of New York Catholics at the fact that their tax dollars are supporting what they view as an assault on their religion. Furthermore, they know that the museum's liberal supporters, like Mrs. Clinton, would be unlikely to defend racist, sexist, or homophobic "artistic expression."

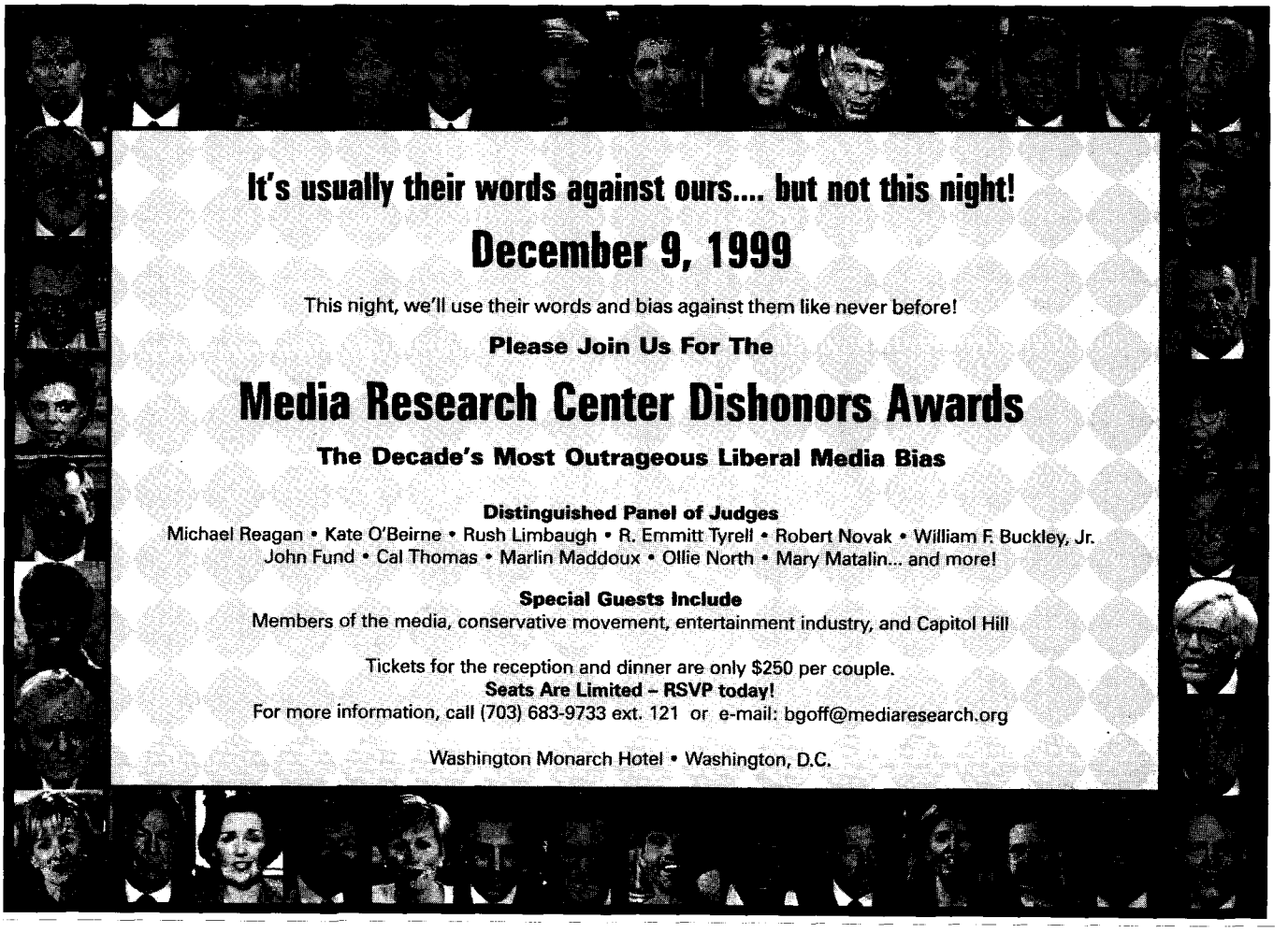
That's why the mayor's "So, sue me" response to the enraged art community is getting a positive response from many. Congressman Vito Fossella of Staten Island, who opposes the FALN clemency offer and supports cutting off federal funds to the Brooklyn Museum, recognizes the simple appeal of declaring what's right and wrong. "New Yorkers like people who speak their minds, which Mrs. Clinton hasn't done on the last couple of issues," he says. Democrats outnumber Republicans 2-to-1 in Fossella's district, but he won reelection last November with 65 percent of the vote.

Hillary's problem is that she has reinvented herself so frequently that she now comes across as thoroughly inauthentic. New Yorkers can be counted on to peg her as a phony. Her rude introduction to New York's ethnic politics serves as a warning of what's ahead.

Early polls indicate that Giuliani leads among independent voters, and holds his base vote better than Hillary holds Democrats. GOP voters will relish opposing Hillary, with the passion many of our grandparents who hated Eleanor Roosevelt would have shown had they gotten a crack at her in the voting booth.

Gov. Christine Todd Whitman's decision to exercise a woman's prerogative and not make a run for the Senate could be a harbinger of Hillary Clinton's withdrawal. Like the First Lady, Whitman enjoys a reputation for political know-how that is not exactly justified. She, too, is thought to have a winning political persona and a bright future in national politics; but in both of her campaigns for governor, she won with less than 50 percent of the vote. With a fractured GOP and a threatened third-party challenge, she faced a loss in November 2000. If she had stayed in the race, the liberal Republicans' formula for electoral success would have been exposed as a fraud.

Whitman chose to pass up the race and keep the myth alive. Hillary Clinton, too, is likely to choose the certainty of iconography over the uncertainty of a Senate seat. **NR**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■ MEDIA ■

Learning His ABC

George Stephanopoulos's on-the-job training.

BYRON YORK

BACK in December 1996, when ABC News hired former Clinton spinner George Stephanopoulos, the network said he would "serve both as a political analyst and a correspondent."

The announcement raised eyebrows even in liberal circles: A *correspondent*? Would the famously partisan Stephanopoulos become an instant network newsman? Within days, ABC was in full backtrack mode.

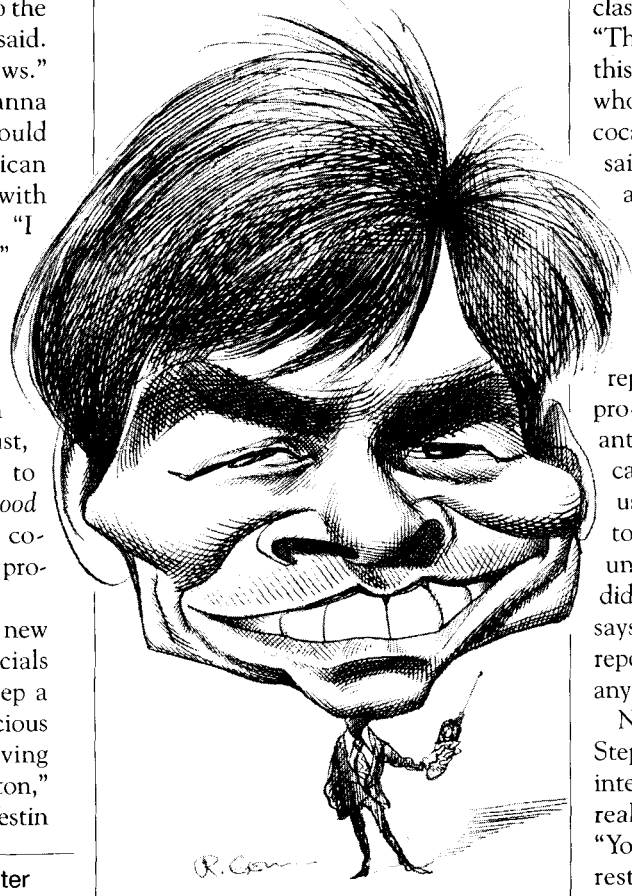
"I don't know how that got into the press release," a spokeswoman said. "He will not report the news." Network vice president Joanna Bistany said Stephanopoulos would be a commentator like Republican William Kristol, who appears with Stephanopoulos on *This Week*. "I view it the same way as Kristol," she said. "He has a point of view, a political persuasion."

That was then. Now ABC says Stephanopoulos really is a reporter after all. He began appearing in this role last August, regularly contributing pieces to *World News Tonight* and *Good Morning America*, and even co-anchoring ABC's overnight news program.

But even as they unveiled the new Stephanopoulos, network officials took pains to say they would keep a close eye on him. "We're all conscious of the sensitivity with him having been part of the news in Washington," news-division president David Westin told the *Washington Post*. For that reason, said Westin, Stephanopoulos will stay away from touchy political stories. "We wouldn't have him be the beat reporter on the Gore campaign," Westin assured.

That's become something of a mantra around ABC these days. "He's not a beat reporter on any of those campaigns," spokeswoman Eileen Murphy declares. "He will not be the beat reporter assigned to a campaign." Although such statements may at first seem definitive, they actually aren't. The key word, it appears, is "beat." Even though Stephanopoulos will not be the regularly assigned reporter—the beat reporter—on any one campaign, Murphy says that "does not mean that we won't have him doing more general political stories." Which means he will, in fact, cover campaigns.

So far, that seems to be all he's doing. On *Good Morning America* on September 28, Stephanopoulos assessed Democratic challenger Bill Bradley's health-care proposal. Two days earlier, on *World News Tonight*, he had compared the Gore and Bradley campaign styles. And a few weeks before that, he had done a one-on-one interview with Bradley that served to underscore the hazards of hiring political operatives to report the news.



George Stephanopoulos by Roman Genn

"You've said that one of the things that really distinguishes you from Vice President Gore is your life experience," Stephanopoulos said to Bradley. "Let me play devil's advocate. In your adult lives, you've both served the better part of two decades in the Senate, both had reputations as cerebral and centrist, willing to tackle complex issues, and the real difference in your adult lives is you spent ten years in the NBA. He spent eight years, or will be eight years, as vice president. . . . Why isn't seven years steps away from the Oval Office as an active vice president really the best training you can have?"

There was more. "I wondered if we could get into the—in your own words—the differences between you and Vice President Gore, on the big issues. Education. He's talked about universal preschool, teacher testing, more investments in new schools, and smaller class sizes. Are you for that?" And this: "The issue of privacy most recently in this campaign has been raised with the whole issue of George W. Bush and cocaine. Today Reverend Jesse Jackson said that George W. Bush should answer all these questions because of a double standard, he says, because young black men are put in jail for the same offense. Do you agree with that?"

This appears to be Stephanopoulos's reportorial style: two questions from a pro-Gore perspective, plus one from an anti-Bush perspective. Perhaps he just can't shake all those talking points he used to write. But don't point that out to ABC. "I don't think anyone is uncomfortable with the interview he did with Bill Bradley," Eileen Murphy says. "We completely trust George's reporting and don't believe he's biased in any way."

Network executives should compare Stephanopoulos's work with the Bradley interview conducted ten days later by a real ABC newsman, Sam Donaldson. "You're saying that you're running to restore confidence in public service," Donaldson said to Bradley on *This Week*.

Byron York is an investigative writer with *The American Spectator*.

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"Has this administration lost confidence?" Then: "Had you been in the Senate last January, how would you have voted on articles one and two of impeachment against President Clinton?" "How do you stand on the death penalty? You voted for it in a number of ways when you were in the Senate." "Would you have offered clemency to the Puerto Ricans who have now left jail? Should the president be required to explain it?" And so on.

Whatever one might think of Donaldson, his questions were straight and solid, and they elicited lots of information in a short period of time.

But give Stephanopoulos the benefit of the doubt. Maybe he really wants to put his War Room days behind him and become a reporter. Can he? "This is not a priesthood," says Brit Hume, the former ABC correspondent who is now managing editor of Fox News in Washington. "Anybody who wants to try his hand at journalism can do that. But that's not the same as saying a major news organization would want to assign somebody who is so obviously raw material to the job of covering hard news."

■

Contrast Stephanopoulos with a *real* newsman—Sam Donaldson, who asks tough and substantive questions.

■

And even if Stephanopoulos genuinely wants to become a journalist, doing so will take time—more time than either he or ABC apparently believes. "It's one thing to come on a TV broadcast and speak knowledgeably about politics as an opinion dispenser," Hume continues. "It is another for somebody overnight to be expected to shed the habits and attitudes of a professional lifetime in favor of the discipline of neutrality expected of a news reporter."

Maybe George Stephanopoulos will get there someday. But perhaps he should not be learning on ABC's, and the viewing public's, time. **NR**

■ PUBLIC POLICY ■

Not So Poor

The luxury of American poverty.

ROBERT RECTOR

THE Census Bureau has just issued its annual poverty report, claiming that nearly 35 million Americans (13 percent of the population) are "living in poverty." But just what does living in poverty mean?

Today, the typical American defined by the government as poor has a car, air conditioning, a refrigerator, a stove, a VCR, a microwave, a stereo, and a color TV. He is able to obtain medical care. His home is in good repair and is not over-crowded. By his own report, his family is not hungry, and in the last year he had sufficient funds to meet all his essential needs. While his life is not opulent, it is far from what the popular consciousness understands by "poverty."

These facts are gleaned from the government's own surveys of the living conditions of the poor. The surveys indicate that most poor Americans today are better housed, better fed, and own more property than *average* Americans throughout most of the century. Today, expenditures per person among the poorest fifth of households equal those of the *average* household in the early 1970s (adjusted for inflation).

Let's look at housing. Forty-one percent of the poor actually own their own homes, typically a three-bedroom house with one-and-one-half baths. It is in good repair, and has a garage or carport, and a porch or patio. The median value of these homes is $65,000, which is 70 percent of the median value of *all* American homes.

Americans, poor and non-poor, live in large and spacious housing. Only 2 percent of America's poor are overcrowded (defined as living with more than 1.5 persons per room). On average, America's poor have 440 square feet of living space per person. This is more than the average citizen in Paris, Berlin, and London; nearly three times the average in the capitals of such nations as Poland and Mexico; and nearly seven times greater than the average in poor nations such as China and India.

Modern conveniences are commonplace—and some nearly ubiquitous—among America's poor. About 70 percent of poor households own a car or truck, and more than a quarter own two or more cars. Two-thirds of the poor have air conditioning, and a similar number have microwaves. Nearly half of all poor households own two or more color television sets. Almost three-quarters of the poor now have VCRs.

Then there is the matter of hunger. Advocates tell us that 35 million Americans live in its grip. But government surveys don't bear this out. Asked if they have enough food to eat, 96 percent of Americans answer yes. Around 3 percent say that they "sometimes" do not have enough to eat, and 0.5 percent say they "often" do not have enough. If we look just at the poor, 86 percent say their families have enough to eat, and only 3 percent say they often do not have enough.

The surveys also show that the diets of the poor and those of the middle class have a similar nutritional content. Poor children and middle-class children consume almost identical amounts of protein, vitamins, and minerals, in most cases well above recommended norms.

And if you want to see a telling contrast, look at the children's height. In truly poor countries, malnutrition keeps children from growing. The World Health Organization finds that 39 percent of children in Africa, and 47 percent of those in Asia, are stunted. Only 2.7 percent of poor American children fall below this low-height threshold—the normal level one would expect, given ordinary genetic variation.

The poor do, however, suffer from one major nutrition-related health problem: obesity. Within an American population tending remarkably toward the overweight, the poor are the heavi-

Mr. Rector is a senior research fellow at the Heritage Foundation.

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est. Medical journals report a growing epidemic of obesity among poor children. For example, a recent medical study of low-income black and Hispanic students in Central Harlem found a full quarter to be "obese," and more than half of these to be "super-obese." The doctors concluded that the nutritional problem seems "to have shifted from under-nutrition to over-nutrition."

The Women, Infants and Children food program—which promotes the consumption of fatty high-calorie foods—recently released a report arguing that it was not responsible for obesity among poor kids. A country in which a federal food program pleads innocence on such an issue is not a nation with a hunger crisis.

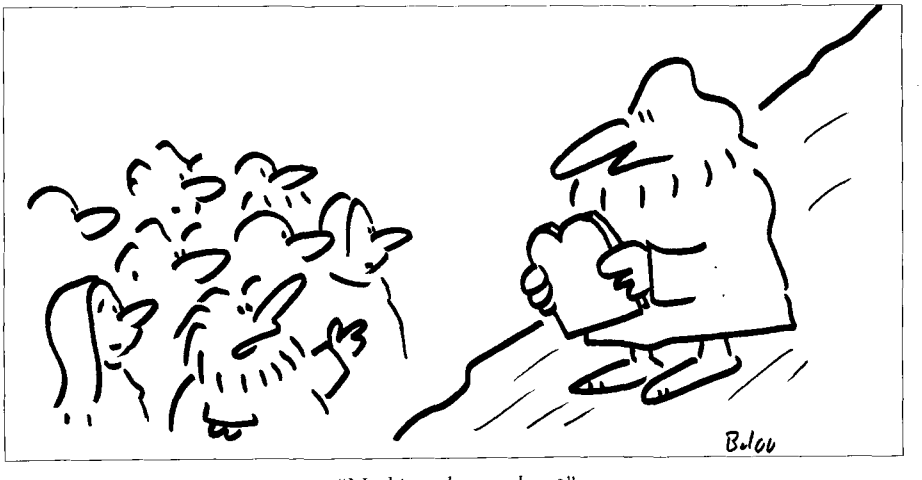
The government had to deny its responsibility for obesity among poor kids—not the mark of a nation with a hunger problem.

Overall, these statistics do not draw a picture of a country with a large part of its population living in serious material want. So why is the Census Bureau claiming that there are 35 million "poor" Americans? For a number of reasons. To begin with, the census defines a family as "poor" if its yearly income falls below certain thresholds. (In 1998, the threshold for a family of four was $16,660.) But while the federal and state governments spent $410 billion on welfare last year, providing cash, food, medical care, and other services to low-income persons, the census counts almost none of this as income—even though it raises appreciably the recipients' standard of living.

Also, the Census Bureau is simply awful at the basic task of counting income. In 1996, the Commerce Department, which measures the gross domestic product, said the total personal income of Americans was $6.8 trillion. But the census counted only $4.8 trillion in personal income—a discrepancy of $2 trillion!

In reality, the annual poverty report, invented at the onset of LBJ's War on Poverty, was never intended to provide an accurate snapshot of living conditions. Its function has been, rather, to state the problem in dire enough terms that public pressure for anti-poverty measures will remain consistently high—a sort of Potemkin village in reverse.

But does the improvement in the material conditions of the poor mean the War on Poverty was a success? Perhaps, but in a very limited sense. The War on Poverty has spent $7.9 trillion aiding the poor, and no one can spend $7.9 trillion without having some positive effect. But the stated goal of the War on Poverty was not merely to prop up material living standards in an ever-broadening dependent population, but to make the poor self-sufficient; and by that standard, the War on Poverty has been, sadly but demonstrably, a disaster. **NR**



"Nothing about salary?"

■ CULTURE WATCH ■

The Failure of Günter Grass

Another Nobel bomb.

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

THE award of the Nobel Prize for Literature to Günter Grass wrings a groan from the heart. The Swedish Academy is at it again. A jury of learned professors in Stockholm has the great treasure to confer. They like to see themselves as advancing universal values, which have come to be defined as the rejection of capitalism in general, and of America in particular. In their hands, the Nobel Prize has become one of the world's foremost symbols of an anti-American political correctness that has for years been the intellectual mainstream in much of the world. When the professors claim that Grass, and especially his novel *The Tin Drum*, has left a mark on the 20th century, they are spouting a most fashionable aberration of the day, which in its local form may be called Swede-think. Needless to say, prize-winners who are so contemptuous of capitalism and America seem able to pocket about a million dollars without noticing the smallest inconsistency.

German is a language that in the hands of its masters in the past had often and beautifully expressed universal values. In this century, of course, Nazism denied the existence of universal values. Germany and its national ends were the sole values that Germans were obliged to respect. Lost was the universalism of Schiller, of that last movement of the Beethoven Ninth; Germans alone had rights. In pursuit of an exclusively German worldview, Nazism imposed an ideology and a vocabulary that drained humanity out of the language, and left its great literature an empty and meaningless ruin. The high purposes of

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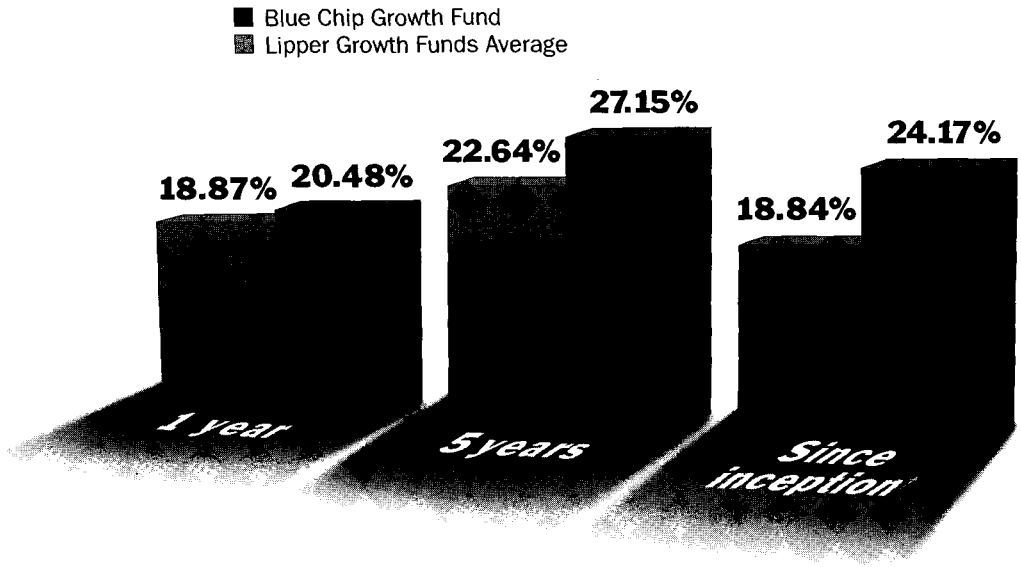

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Schiller, Goethe, Kant, and all the other masters seemed horribly negated.

How was a German writer after 1945 to recover the language and restore humanity to it? This immense task could be achieved only by telling true stories, bringing to life people, their choices and their fates. There is an example of a comparable feat, but it is in Russia. There, also in the face of ruin and a degraded language, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn assembled in *The Gulag Archipelago* many hundreds of personal stories with an empathy that personalized and dramatized the scale of the disaster, confronting the nation with what had been done in its name. In 1970 he received a Nobel Prize that for once was deserved. Apart from Saul Bellow, I. B. Singer, and Czeslaw Milosz, it has pretty much been Swede-think all the way since then.

Nazism was possible only because so many Germans enthusiastically participated in it, and they were prepared to condone its crimes in return for the apparent supremacy it brought. There has been no German Solzhenitsyn to personalize and dramatize the cause and effect of this. Of course, many if not most German writers and historians have reported stories and facts from the Nazi era, but not a single one has had the power or imagination to bring the nation to face the enormity of Nazism, and through pity and terror to purge itself of the past. Ordinary Germans often remain in a state of confusion as a result. To many, Nazism was all the fault of someone else, usually of Hitler alone, as if he had been the devil with omnipotence. Unable or unwilling to think through the reality of Nazism, they swing uneasily between resentment at the blame still free-floating in the atmosphere, and a self-pity that is the other side of the coin.

Grass's *Tin Drum*, published in 1959, flourishes a vivid style, but in every other respect it is a misleading book, whose success has been pernicious. The central concept in the novel is that Hitler really was a devil and Nazism essentially the spell he cast, a bewitchment. If that was so, then Germans were the victims of a higher power against which they were defenseless, and they cannot be held accountable. The reasons that Germans became Nazis are open to rational analysis, but *The Tin Drum* instead encourages the mystification that they couldn't really help themselves. The opposite of the Solzhenitsyn truth-telling that enables people to understand their choices and their fates, Grass's approach smoothly converts Germans from active agents of Nazism into passive victims. The cop-out could hardly be more complete.

Grass went on to argue that the present was a replica of the past in many ways. The post-Nazi enemy was the United States, with its capitalism and its consumerism. The United States was responsible for starting and pursuing the Cold War, he insisted, while the Soviet Union was not oppressing central and eastern

Günter Grass by Roman Genn

Europe with its military occupation, but merely taking legitimate precautions against U.S. aggression. Not a Communist, Grass became a model fellow traveler by default. A speechwriter and longtime campaigner for Chancellor Willy Brandt, Grass took the position that appeasement of the Soviet Union was an imperative. Victimized once more, the Germans were right to feel resentment and self-pity, but this time they had to take measures to help themselves.

A bear of a man, with a droopy moustache, and a smoker's pipe in his hand, Grass played the eternal student, a caricature beyond parody. He dearly loved a demonstration and a row. Somehow the television cameras seemed to be always in place when he was about to storm a church or a hall, or lead a march against American military installations. On public platforms and at conferences, he specialized in rudeness, hectoring others while proclaiming his own virtues as a feminist, a Green Earther, a Third Worlder, and so on. The anger no doubt was sincere, but so was the irrationality and the self-pity.

America, he believes, is founded on "stolen land and the genocide of Indians." In recent times, America, pretending to protect Germany, was actually expanding its power. American policy in Europe, as in Central America, had a threatening core of colonialism. Particularly hostile to the deployment of cruise missiles in Germany to balance Soviet SS-20s, Grass was very free with warnings and strategic advice to President Reagan, the Pope, Chancellor Kohl, and anyone else in earshot. He gives no credit to these men for the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany. Liberation from Communism failed to please him. Germany now appears to him to have become once more a sort of fascist menace to the world, and he has been waving the word Auschwitz about like an emblem. The man who had the skills to revive the German language and infuse it with universal values has instead subjected it to ideological abuse in an unparalleled series of cop-outs and false equivalents and plain political misjudgments.

In the Swede-think of the Nobel Prize jury, Grass's moral and human obtuseness is described as coming to grips with "the enormous task of reviewing contemporary history." In the same Swede-think, intellectuals are glorified for the quality of their self-pity, and for their unreasoning anger against the values that support them. It is a tragicomedy of our times that someone so consistently and egregiously politicized as Grass is taken seriously and honored. T. S. Eliot, the Nobel Prize winner in 1948, gave the only advice appropriate in the circumstances: "Wipe your hand across your mouth, and laugh." **NR**

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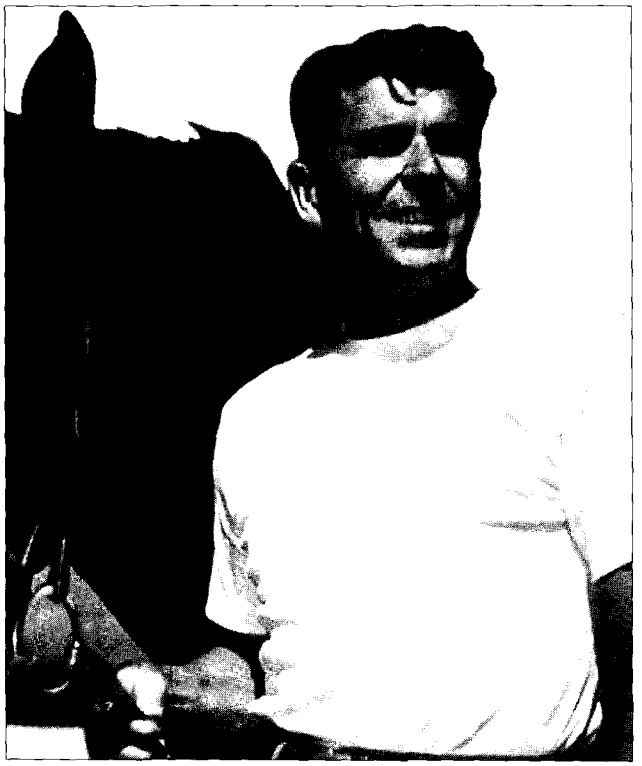
■ COVER STORY ■

Not the Authorized Biography

Dutch: A Memoir of Ronald Reagan, by Edmund Morris.

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

DUTCH is described very firmly on its cover as a "memoir" of Ronald Reagan. This announces an oddity from the first, because a memoir is usually a personal account of some famous person by an old friend or colleague. It supplements, but does not replace, the full-dress biography because it is a less comprehensive and more intimate portrait of its subject, painted not in the harsh primary colors of historical evaluation but in the gentler hues of reminiscence.



But Edmund Morris is not an old friend of President Reagan, nor even an old colleague. He is a professional writer, the author of an acclaimed biography of Theodore Roosevelt, who was commissioned in 1985 to write the authorized biography of Ronald Reagan and accordingly given unparalleled access to the White House as a kind of historian in residence. The idea was that he should combine the skills of a practiced biographer with the privilege of a bird's-eye view.

This was a unique opportunity. As Morris accompanied the president to meetings in the Oval Office, summits with Mikhail Gorbachev, and political events around America, he must have realized that his experience would give unusual depth and richness to his overall portrait of Reagan. And this is, in part, so. The passages in which he accompanies "Dutch" on a post-retirement visit to the town where he was born, or watches from the wings as the president strides out to take control of Gorbachev and the Geneva summit, are among the liveliest and most revealing in the book.

Unfortunately, he also realized that he would not enjoy the same advantage when he came to deal with events that had occurred before he himself arrived on the scene. And since that period covered Reagan's life from his birth to the end of his first presidential term, Morris must have feared that the greater part of his book would lack the immediacy of its final chapters. So the biographer decided to grant himself privileged access to the whole of Reagan's life by writing himself into it as an acquaintance who hovered on the fringe of Reagan's circle.

Morris has therefore written not one book, but three books that jostle uneasily together between the same hard covers. The first book is an authorized presidential biography that, because of the space devoted to the other two, falls short in certain respects, notably in assessing Reagan's full historical achievement; the second is notes and jottings for a memoir of Reagan drawn from his real experiences as Reagan's literary shadow; and the third is a postmodern novel, *The Man Who Knew Ronald Reagan*, in which a fictional character called Edmund Morris describes how his own life has intertwined with Ronald Reagan's in the course of writing a memoir about him.

Does this literary device of a fictional author actually work? Arguments can certainly be advanced for it. The author in a biography always has elements of a fictional character, because he possesses an apparently godlike knowledge that enables him to make the most sweeping judgments of his subject's life. Thus do professors who can scarcely keep order in the classroom correct Bismarck's statecraft. At least Morris's

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fiction is clearly and candidly a device; no one is deceived. It gives the entire book a uniformity of tone and style—that of the aforementioned memoir—while also allowing Reagan's career to be seen and judged from several different perspectives, not just "Edmund Morris"'s, and not all of them friendly. Both Morris's "son," Gavin, and his "friend," Paul Rae, are witnesses for the prosecution, Gavin a student revolutionary who sees the Gipper as the smiling face of a corrupt corporate "power elite," Paul Rae a bitchy homosexual writer (and early AIDS victim) who regards him as the vacant repository of narrow small-town virtues. And the fictions are closely tethered to the facts of Reagan's life, confirmed in detailed footnotes that give the real sources for accounts that appear here in the mouths of Morris, Rae, Gavin, and others.

Set against these arguments is the large and unavoidable fact that the final product is a mixture of fact and fiction, and we cannot be sure which is which on any one page. George Will, for instance, has cited one passage in which the later (and thus presumably more factual) Edmund Morris seems to

Morris's use of an invented self occasionally produces some almost comic egocentricities.

be present at a medical examination where Reagan is diagnosed as harboring a dangerous cancer. In fact, the scene is an invented one, based to be sure on the doctor's subsequent notes, but supplemented by what W. S. Gilbert sardonically called "merely corroborative detail, intended to give artistic verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative." Such a mixture of fact and fiction is ultimately fiction, and its presence disables a biography that by definition claims to be the nearest approximation to documentary truth that the biographer can achieve. Whatever the reason, however, I found the fictional characters and their accounts an irritant and had to conquer an urge to skip them as I went along.

At times Morris justifies this unusual technique as necessary to explore the mystery of Ronald Reagan's personality. Just how mysterious, however, is the Gipper? Reagan himself, in his own post-presidential autobiography, has conceded one surprising trait—namely, that he is essentially a private person, convivial in a crowd but remote and even aloof in private, who uses jokes and anecdotes to keep others at bay (and, incidentally, who can fire and forget formerly close colleagues at will). Unembarrassed by any mystery here, Reagan advances the commonsense speculation that this remoteness is the result of his short-sightedness, which, unrecognized until his early teens, placed a curtain between himself and the world in his formative years. It is, of course, Nancy Reagan who pierced this curtain and has since been his indispensable ambassadress to the world.

Morris agonizes over a slightly different point of psychology—namely, the mystery of what complex private reality lies behind Reagan's public personality, with its firm opinions and genial demeanor. Maybe, though, the mystery of Reagan is that he is not mysterious. An English Tory friend once explained wistfully to me that the only place he could express his true opinions was on a public platform: "If I were to say at a dinner party that England is a great country and that we have shaped the modern world for the better, from ending the international slave trade to holding the line against Hitler, people would mock me unmercifully. I can say such things in a public speech because the same people assume I am playing to the gallery. In fact, those are the things I really believe; it is my cynical remarks over the dinner table that are insincere." What distinguishes Reagan from the platform patriot is that he was not afraid to be patriotic in private. The virtues he admired in the small-town America in which he grew up, the decisive contribution America made to saving the world from two totalitarianisms—these he was prepared to celebrate equally at a dinner party or in a public speech. As he himself said, he is "an open book," all of a piece. It is such simple, uncomplicated honesty that strikes the modern mind, especially the mind of a postmodern literary intellectual, as requiring explanation.

And here Morris has been seriously misjudged by his critics. Several of his dismissive remarks—in particular his question to himself as to whether President Reagan was "an airhead"—have been quoted as if they were his final and considered judgment. In fact, he threw out the "airhead" speculation when, as he admits, he was undergoing a biographical crisis: The more he tried to grasp Reagan's personality, the more it eluded him. And as he goes along, he tests out various other explanations of the Gipper.

This juggling of judgments, as well as inviting charges of inconsistency, has the effect of making Morris a much more central figure than he should be in someone else's biography. Indeed, it occasionally produces some almost comic egocentricities, as my NR colleague, Michael Potemra, observed in an otherwise largely favorable account: "On page 327, the author recounts the reaction of a fictional character named Edmund Morris to the assassination of President Kennedy. Consigned to an endnote on page 761 is the following: 'For the less-than-anguished reaction of the Reagans to JFK's death, see [Reagan daughter Patti] Davis, *The Way I See It*, 81–83.' In other words, if you want to know about a fictional character based on me, read this text; if you're curious about some Reagan facts, read Patti's book."

Yet there is at least some method in this madness. For the fictional Morris means something beyond himself projected backwards in time. He is a not-quite-representative member of what Professor Whittle Johnson calls "the academic-media complex," disliking its "vituperative" hostility to Reagan, but sharing many of its prejudices all the same. As the book proceeds, however, both the fictional and real Edmund Morris gradually overcome these prejudices and struggle towards a discovery of the Reagan in plain sight. They abandon their initial condescension and grow to appreciate both his decency as a private man and his far-sighted statesmanship as a public one. And though the president's fictional critics, Gavin and Paul Rae, retain their hostility to him until they both depart—Paul Rae to the next world, Gavin into the leftist underground—nonetheless they shrink into dogmatic and insignificant critics before our gaze. Paul Rae in particular is

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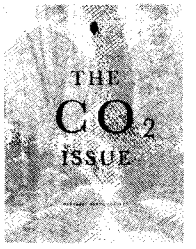

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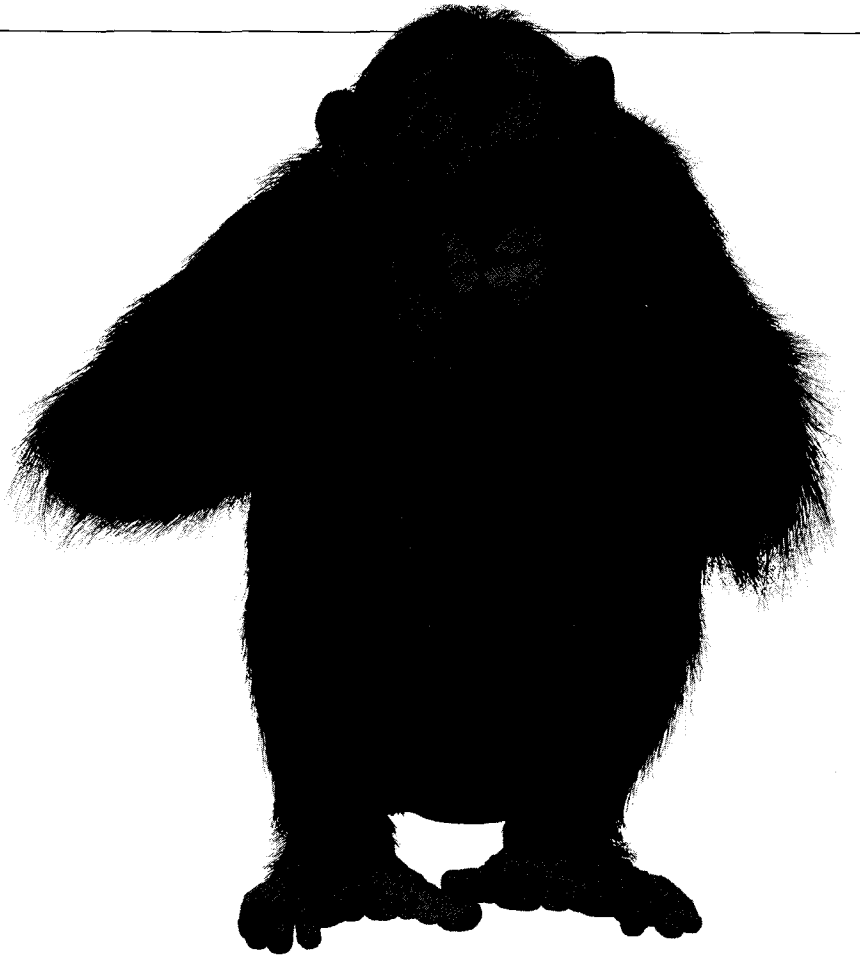

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bound to resent a man who has remained true to the early American verities he himself has rejected—and not merely remained true to them, but made them sing and fostered their victory.

By the end of the book, therefore, Morris has rendered a judgment on President Reagan that, though not without qualifications, is massively favorable. A few points of character at random: He is a brave man who, as a lifeguard, saved 77 lives. He is without bigotry and, in the early '40s, when such acts were still risky, resigned from a country club that excluded Jews. He has a high sense of public duty and, when asked to present a prize to the top student at West Point, insisted on staying for several hours to hand diplomas to the entire class, on the grounds that one day he might have to send them into action. He has a crisp sense of priorities and was always on top of what he judged, usually rightly, to be important. As a hostile critic, Arthur Liman, chief counsel to the Iran-contra committee, said on reading Reagan's private journal: "I'm amazed at the clarity of his executive thinking, his modesty and lack of emotion. Not at all what I expected." And he had the moral courage to tell the simple truths that brought down an evil empire.

Not that Morris's final judgments are entirely satisfactory. He gets the Big Picture triumphantly right—Reagan is, before all else, the man who "won the Cold War without firing a shot," in Margaret Thatcher's words. But there are curiously few references to Reagan's historic partnerships with both the Pope and Lady Thatcher—even François Mitterrand gets more ink (perhaps because he has the wittier lines). And there is a lack of balance and perspective in other respects. While making the obligatory mention of "deficits as far as the eye can see," for instance, Morris acknowledges that "Reaganomics" led to the longest peacetime expansion in history. But there is less about economics than there should be in a Reagan biography. After all, the longest peacetime expansion in history has now lasted, with only the briefest interruption, for 17 years, and Reagan's reshaping of U.S. industry in the 1980s plainly created the world-beating modern information economy whose cascading revenues have transformed the predicted deficits into large surpluses. Mrs. Reagan is given full credit for both giving and inspiring great love, but she is otherwise treated shabbily as a rich Republican with a blinkered view of life—evidence, surely, that Morris is simply wearing a different set of blinkers. And it is both snobbish and wrong to criticize Reagan for lack of interest in poetry when you have quoted him as reciting Robert (*Songs of a Sourdough*) Service after only one reading; a difference in taste is not the same thing as a lack of interest. (Besides which, I happen to like Service myself.)

The Reagans boarding the presidential helicopter, Marine One, *in 1986*

In a final moving "Epilogue," Morris attends an academic conference at which, amid some criticism, the dominant note is one of growing recognition that Reagan was one of our greatest presidents and that his greatest achievement was the toppling of the Soviet Union. The biographer writes a report to the president, describing this heartening debate in which the Russian speakers had been among his strongest partisans. But we know that already Alzheimer's had begun to wreak its havoc on the Old Man, and that therefore any re-evaluation of his achievements will have to depend on others. With all its faults, this book contributes to that reevaluation. Hence the desperate relief with which liberal critics have seized upon postmodern techniques they might otherwise have praised to discredit conclusions that utterly undermine the picture they have painted of a genial half-wit presiding half-asleep over a Decade of Greed and the self-generated implosion of the Soviet Union. The *Saturday Night Live* sketch, showing a dynamic Reagan barking commands in various languages to Swiss banks and Mideast weapons brokers, is actually nearer the mark.

And there is the sadness of it. If Morris had written a conventional biography and followed it up a few years later with this book, describing it as a novel that drew upon real historical facts and his own meetings with Ronald Reagan, we might all now be acclaiming his genius. Indeed, we would probably be arguing that the book conveyed far more deeply than any conventional biography two elusive truths: first, the manly straightforwardness of Reagan, and, second, the agonizing difficulty that modern self-conscious intellectuals have in comprehending simplicity of character. (Remove their skepticism, indeed, and one would have to ask, "Where's the rest of them?") Once the immediate controversy over Morris's postmodern literary methods has receded, therefore, *Dutch* may have a long afterlife as Reagan's historical reputation inevitably rises and as people want to learn more about America's lifeguard.

For the moment, however, it remains a companion volume to the authorized biography of Ronald Reagan that remains to be written, that needs to be written, and that Morris had an unparalleled opportunity to write. And in the end that makes *Dutch* a failure—but a failure more fascinating and moving than many a pedestrian success. **NR**

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A Book Unglued

The madness of the method.

JOHN PODHORETZ

EDMUND MORRIS had writer's block and suffered a breakdown while trying to commit his biography of Ronald Reagan to paper. And a close reading of his *Dutch* suggests that Morris never emerged from either condition. The book has been misunderstood by those who accuse Morris of succumbing to postmodern solipsism when he cast it as a novel featuring a fictionalized version of Morris observing and interacting with Reagan for 70 years.

This is no postmodernist jape of a biography. If it were, *Dutch* would be a text worth engaging with and arguing with in an effort to preserve the traditions of biography and history. But engaging with and arguing with *Dutch* is a little like getting into a quarrel with a high-functioning schizophrenic. Every time you think the schizophrenic is saying something interesting, the madness begins to emerge, and you find yourself trapped by the glittering eye of the Ancient Mariner.

Dutch is a work of lunacy—a horrifying display of personality disintegration spread across 674 tightly printed pages and 150 pages more of the most bizarre footnotes since Vladimir Nabokov used annotations to depict an academic's descent into madness in his novel *Pale Fire*. The book may be long, but it is not a coherent or complete text. It is, rather, a patchwork quilt made up of desperate writing exercises that Morris must have engaged in over the space of the 14 years he worked on the book to find some way, any way, to get from the beginning of Ronald Reagan's life to his senescence.

The book is chockablock with incidents from Reagan's life written in the form of film scripts. It relays important information about Reagan's career in dozens of fictional letters sent to the fictional Morris by imaginary people. It depicts the last two years of the Reagan presidency largely through excerpts from Morris's contemporaneous notebooks. The book even concludes with three pointless poems by Morris—two about Reagan and one about the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, presumably because he went there with Reagan in 1985.

All of these devices are the outgrowth of Morris's writer's block, which he publicly admitted to in 1990. Imagine a bricklayer who suddenly finds himself unable one morning to lay one brick on top of the next for no apparent reason other than a crippling fear. Or imagine that the bricklayer in question is suddenly convinced that he no longer knows how to place a brick next to another. Or imagine that he convinces himself he has placed the brick in the wrong spot, even though he hasn't.

That's what writer's block is—a form of depressive paralysis unique to those who take up the pen for a living. Writers will often try to trick themselves out of a block by trying to put words on paper in any way they can. Thus, the film scripts, the letters, the diary entries, the poems—these were all ways for Morris to put something down until Clio, the Muse of history, returned to his side.

But Clio never reappeared. And Morris was into Random House for almost $2 million by this time (his $3 million advance was paid off in yearly installments). And so, in 1993, Morris hit upon the device of aging himself into Reagan's contemporary.

This was a terrible idea, but you can see how Morris might think he had found salvation in it. The book he couldn't write was a biography of Reagan. But a fictionalized autobiography? That was different. That raised all kinds of fun issues that he could explore, like, Who would the new Edmund Morris be? Who would his parents be? What would "I" do for a living? And how could "I" be brought into proximity with the real Ronald Reagan, early on?

Reagan appears on every page of this book, but until he becomes president on page 411 he shares equal time with "Edmund Morris," Morris's son "Gavin," and Morris's friend "Paul Rae." So intent is Morris on exploring this fictional setup that he excludes discussion of several key events in Reagan's political career. Of the nationally televised speech Reagan gave in 1964 for Barry Goldwater that made him overnight the hottest political figure in America, Morris writes only: "Nothing is more dated than old campaign rhetoric, so I won't belabor 'The Speech' except to say it was (for all of Reagan's innocent protestations) clearly a proclamation of himself as Goldwater's successor."

Later, there isn't a word about how Reagan became the foremost opponent of Jimmy Carter's surrender of the Panama Canal—when he both spoke on a matter of principle and kept himself in the public eye during the late 1970s, in

Mr. Podhoretz, associate editor of the *New York Post*, was a speechwriter for President Reagan.

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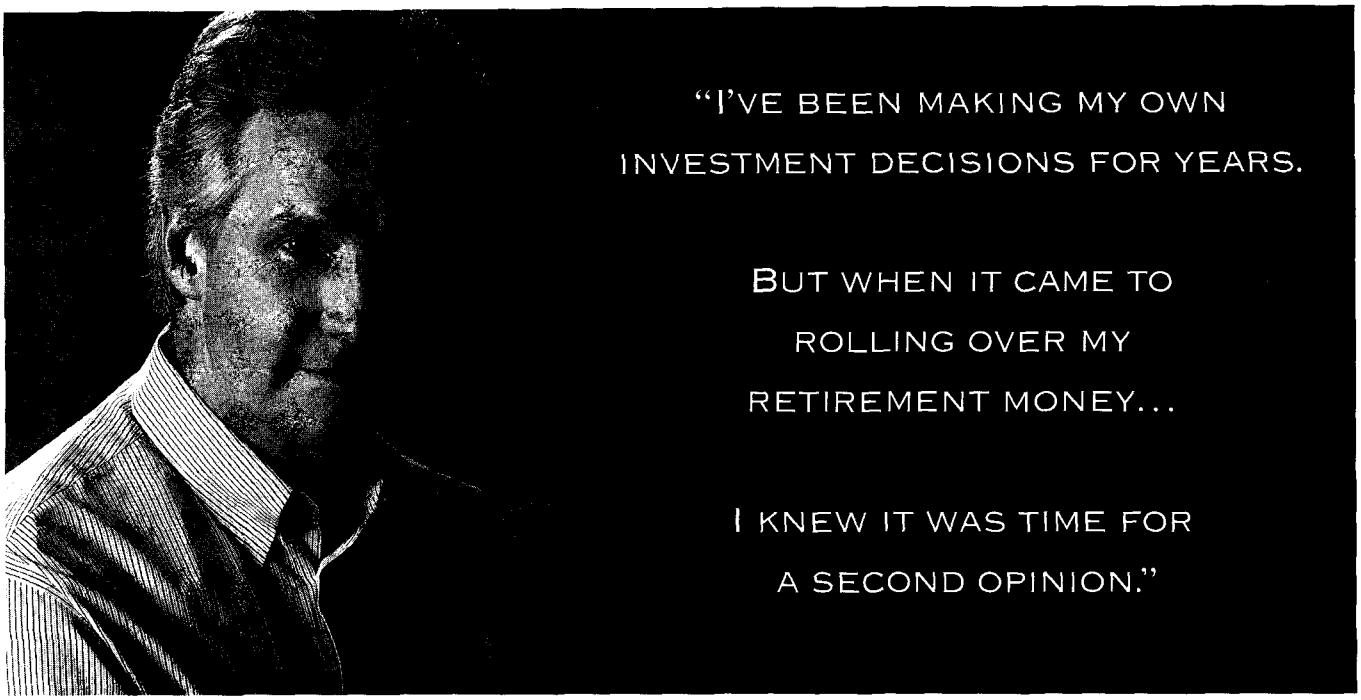
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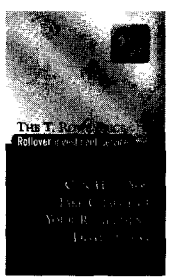

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preparation for his successful presidential run in 1980.

These are all part of history, and Morris found himself incapable of writing Reagan's history. Instead, we get eight endless pages in which he converts the fluffy plot of Reagan's first movie, *Love Is on the Air*, into a grandiloquent epic that parallels his bewildering comparison of Reagan's life journey with the quest for the Holy Grail. Or four pages on how he, Morris, couldn't get aboard Air Force One on the way to the 1985 summit in Geneva and had to sit next to a researcher in the speechwriting office.

Or we get the saga of that phony son, Gavin—whom another character in the book calls "Gawain" in yet another nutso parallel with the Holy Grail saga. Gavin becomes a radical at Berkeley in the 1960s. His "dad," "Morris," goes up to find him during the riots around Sproul Hall and gets a dose of tear gas: "Some cop, seeing me limp, took pity on me and helped me through. 'C'mon, old fella, you don't want to be messed up in this.'"

Gavin ends up going underground, which embitters Morris. "Hundreds of other old men," he writes, "nurture querulous hopes that one day their graying sons will come back home from Sweden or Vancouver. But Gavin won't.

Episodes of pure fiction in this book are more detailed and vivid than the description of Reagan's governance.

Child of the south, beach boy, desert lover, he never took to northern light. Going underground, where there was no light at all, meant the same to him as to any ancient Greek. And it was you, Dutch, who sent him there."

This entire storyline, which I suppose is intended to show the dark side of Reagan's tenure as governor of California, is detailed and vividly described as no single act of governance by Reagan ever is. Whatever symbolic purpose it may have is swallowed up in the sense you get as a reader that Morris is sitting at his desk, weeping as he writes of the disappearance forever of his beloved son—a person who never existed.

This isn't even the craziest thing about *Dutch*. Describing the mood of Los Angeles after World War II, Morris says, "Those of us who had to make do on less than six figures were conscious only of vague loss and gloom." (Oh, really? Only a month after V-J Day?) He claims that "the social equipoise" of the years before the war—those notorious days of social equipoise known as the Great Depression—were now "disintegrating."

And then he unleashes this as evidence: "Black GIs, returning stateside from French whorehouses, furtively ogled your wife."

Let me repeat that. "Black GIs, returning stateside from French whorehouses, furtively ogled your wife."

Did his editor actually read that sentence? Or had he, by page 219, simply given up, lost as he must have become in the thickets of the author's prosodic madness?

Don't let it happen to you. **NR**

This Is It?

A Reaganaut laments.

PETER ROBINSON

EDMUND MORRIS'S biography of Ronald Reagan is so bad in so many ways that reviewers will be able to write about it for weeks without exhausting its faults. So far, critics have concentrated on the weirdness and self-indulgence of Morris's narrative technique. But what of his scholarship? Did he do his research? Does he get his facts straight? Does he accurately render the historical context?

I was a speechwriter in the Reagan White House for six years, so I examined Morris's treatment of the president's big speeches with particular interest. It gives me no pleasure to say so—like dozens of other Reaganites, I got to know Morris over the years—but his scholarship is appalling.

I offer three examples. First, the "Evil Empire" address of 1983. Morris spends several paragraphs investigating the origins of the phrase "evil empire" itself, perhaps the most important pairing of words in the history of the Cold War. He begins by noting that Tony Dolan, Reagan's chief speechwriter, wrote the address. Then he suggests that the phrase nevertheless originated with Alexandre de Marenches, the chief of French intelligence, who, briefing President-elect Reagan in 1980, referred to the Soviet Union as "*l'empire du mal.*"

So? Who put the phrase in the speech? Dolan? De Marenches? Reagan himself, recalling the phrase from de Marenches? Morris provides no answer.

It was Tony Dolan. Tony inserted "evil empire" in a draft that was sent to Reagan before Tony and the president even discussed the speech. Morris had 14 years in which to establish the facts. If he had examined the drafts of the speech kept at the Reagan Library, he could have done so in 20 minutes. I grant, of course, that the authorship of "evil empire" is a small point, of interest principally to former Reagan speechwriters, and just possibly to editors of the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Yet it says something about the credibility of Morris's entire project that, in an instance such as this, when doing the research would have been easy, he proved negligent.

Next, the Berlin Wall address of 1987. Morris writes:

> "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!" declaims Dutch, trying hard to look infuriated, but succeeding only in an expression of mild petulance. The occasion too staged, the crowd too small and well-primed, to make for genuine drama . . .

Morris neglects an episode that bears directly on the president's delivery. Shortly before giving the speech, Reagan looked over the Wall, saw that the streets in East Berlin

Mr. Robinson is a fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford. His next book, *It's My Party: A Republican's Messy Love Affair with the GOP*, will be published by Warner Books next spring.

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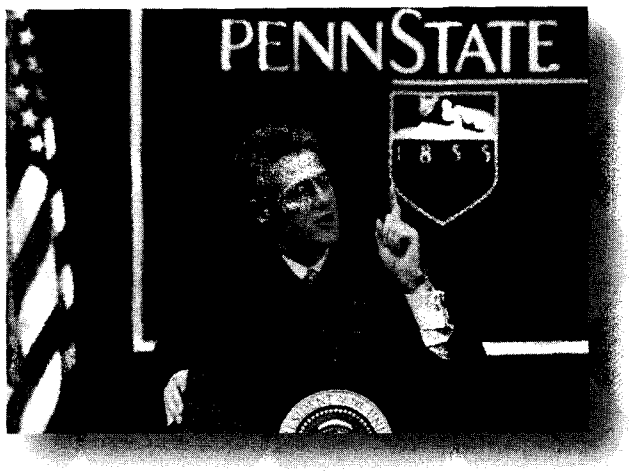

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were deserted, and was told by one of his German hosts that, although a crowd had gathered in East Berlin to hear him, it had been dispersed by the East German police. When Reagan called on Gorbachev to tear down the wall, in the belief of many who observed him that day, he was expressing something more than "mild petulance." Was the crowd "too small"? It was estimated at 10,000. Was it too "well-primed"? By whom? In what way? What is Morris even talking about?

He continues:

> What a rhetorical opportunity missed. [Reagan] could have read Robert Frost's poem, "Something there is that doesn't love a wall," to simple and shattering effect.

The poem that Morris cites, "Mending Wall," represents a subtle, psychologically complicated reflection, open to interpretation, certainly, but on the whole an assertion of the need for the barriers that permit each of us a certain realm of privacy. The operative line, used twice, is "Good fences make good neighbors." "Mending Wall" is thus, so to speak, a pro-wall poem. Quoting it in front of the Berlin Wall would have been ludicrous.

The historical context? Morris proves too obtuse to notice. Still a relatively new Soviet leader, Gorbachev had only recently announced the policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. With the Berlin Wall address, Reagan offered his first public response, stating, in effect, that Gorbachev would have to prove that he meant what he said. Hence the lines, "General Secretary Gorbachev, *if* you seek peace, . . . *if* you seek liberalization, come here. . . ." There may indeed have been better ways to put it. But Morris offers no indication that he even understood what was being attempted.

Last, the Moscow State University address of 1988. Morris opens with a flat factual error, attributing the speech to Tony Dolan when it was actually drafted by Josh Gilder. Then he writes:

> Here in this huge . . . hall are a thousand or so children of the *nomenklatura*. . . . I am touched by the nods and smiles and careful note-taking whenever Dutch says anything in praise of basic human freedoms. Alas, he tires during the Q&A session afterwards, and rambles off into an embarrassing defense of U.S. government policy toward Indians, but the amazing thing is that these children understand what is happening: that he is old and somewhat naïve and the dupe of some of his own sentimentalities. They know he is talking nonsense, but they forgive him.

If Morris had interviewed the students in the audience instead of simply imputing to them the thoughts in his own mind, he might have seen what I suspect many of them saw: that an American president speaking in the very heart of Moscow about human freedom signified a world turning upside down, or rather, after more than six decades of a Communist Russia, rightside up. Raised in a system in which the starvation or slaughter of tens of millions of citizens by their own government had been hushed up, many of the students no doubt found it profoundly moving that the president believed himself accountable, even to them, foreigners, for what his country had done to Indians—no matter how awkwardly he may have explained it.

Gets Movie Job

Ronald "Dutch" Reagan, (above) son of Mr. and Mrs. John Reagan, 107 Monroe avenue, Dixon, has signed a six-months' contract with the Warner Brothers motion picture studio, according to word received by his parents yesterday. A 7-year option clause is included in the contract. While a life guard at Lowell park beach at Dixon, Reagan saved 71 lives in six seasons.

Reagan, a Dixon high school and Eureka college graduate, left Dixon about three years ago and has been employed as a sports announcer at a Des Moines, Ia., radio station. He took a successful screen test while in California covering spring training activities of the Chicago Cubs.

From the Dixon, Ill., Evening Telegraph, *1937*

Now that the authorized biography of the president has been stillborn, my fellow Reaganites and I find ourselves undergoing something akin to Elisabeth Kubler-Ross's five stages of grief. In our own mourning, I have counted four stages.

The first was anger. How, we asked one another, reading one outrageous passage after another over the telephone, could Morris have engaged in such a grotesque betrayal of the confidence the Reagans had placed in him? Then came amusement. Much of what Morris writes is so wildly misjudged as to prove hilarious. When we tried to picture the president striding to his lectern in front of the concrete and barbed wire of the Berlin Wall, clearing his throat, then reciting, "Something there is that doesn't love a wall," we found ourselves hooting.

The third stage swept upon us even as we were still trying to stop chuckling. It was genuine grief. Morris was given access to the president and Mrs. Reagan, to their family, to their papers, and, for that matter, to all of us, their supporters. He could have produced a magnificent volume, telling the tale of Reagan's remarkable life while providing a scholarly assessment of Reagan's achievements, establishing the president's place in history. There was every reason to suppose he would do just that—as recently as last week, an hour before my copy of *Dutch* arrived in the mail, I told a television producer at MSNBC that when I appeared on his program I would be defending Morris, so certain did I still feel that *Dutch* would prove of the same high standard as Morris's previous book, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*. Instead—well, this.

The last stage is of course resignation.

All of us grant that Morris deserves a measure of sympathy. Reagan could be maddening. Indeed, in one encounter

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Controlled Access To Heroin Makes Sense

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- **The percentage of participants in the heroin maintenance program holding a job rose from 14% to 32%.**
- **The percentage of participants in the heroin maintenance program who were homeless dropped from 12% to 1%.**
- **There were significant drops in the use of illegal drugs reported, including heroin, cocaine, marijuana and benzodiazepines.**
- **There was no diversion of prescribed heroin to the illegal street market.**
- **There were no overdoses from heroin prescribed by the program.**

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Robert Ali et al, "Report of the External Panel on the Evaluation of the Swiss Scientific Studies of Medically Prescribed Narcotics to Drug Addicts," The World Health Organization, April 1999.

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after he left office, Reagan did to me what he seems to have done to Morris over and over.

It was the spring of 1989, and I had stopped by Reagan's offices in Los Angeles to say hello. After a moment of small talk, the former president frowned and asked if I had seen the morning newspaper. I had, noticing over breakfast that the *Los Angeles Times* referred to Reagan in two front-page stories. "Saw Risk of Reagan Impeachment, Meese Says," one headline read, while the other stated, "'Star Wars' Was Oversold, Cheney Says."

"I just don't understand it," said Reagan.

"Neither do I, Mr. President." In a moment, I thought, I would be hearing the innermost story of Iran-contra or Star Wars, or, if I was lucky, both.

"How can a *judge* decide the outcome of a sporting event?"

It took me a minute to realize that Reagan was not talking about his administration. He was commenting on the America's Cup. A judge in New York had just awarded the cup to the boat from New Zealand, even though the

Reagan seems to have driven Morris crazy largely because he himself was so sane.

American boat had put in a faster time. "San Diego Loses America's Cup," the headline stated.

"Well," said Reagan, a twinkle in his eye, "at least it wasn't a judge I appointed."

When I left, I felt disappointed. I had had my moment with the man who won the Cold War, and all I had managed to come away with was some talk about a boat race. How could Reagan have done that to me? If I had been in Morris's position, responsible for producing the definitive biography of Reagan, perhaps that would have been the moment when I began to lose my grip as completely as Morris seems to have lost his.

As it was, by the time I was back on the Santa Monica Freeway, I recognized that Reagan had given me a very good example of the wisdom and simplicity of spirit that I had always cherished in him. For eight years he had been the most powerful man in the world. He had accomplished what he set out to accomplish, or at least as much as he could. Then he had gone back to being as ordinary an American as a former president can be. When Reagan looked at the newspaper, he read about sports. He seems to have driven Morris crazy largely because he himself was so sane.

"Who knows?" we Reaganites now find ourselves saying. By producing this bizarre volume, Morris may even have performed a service to Reagan, making readers hungry for good books about him. On Amazon.com the other day, I counted 231 biographies of FDR. Since Ronald Reagan dominated the second half of this century just as FDR dominated the first, we Reaganites console ourselves that there are another couple of hundred biographies of Reagan still to come. **NR**

In Defense of Facts

What opinion rests on.

ROGER KIMBALL

IT is a pity that Edmund Morris's parents did not acquaint him more thoroughly with the teachings of Samuel Johnson. "Accustom your children constantly to this," Johnson advised; "if a thing happened at one window, and they, when relating it, say that it happened at another, do not let it pass, but instantly check them; you do not know where deviation from truth will end."

One place it winds up is in books like *Dutch*. In the controversy over Morris's book (I hesitate to call it a biography) about Ronald Reagan, I am firmly on the side of the critics. Peggy Noonan got it about right, I believe, when she observed in her review for the *Wall Street Journal* that *Dutch* is a "waste—of history's time, the Reagans' faith, the writer's talent."

It is the first item, the traducing of history, that is most troubling. Morris has been roundly, and rightly, criticized for a lack of sympathy with his subject. Given the unparalleled access he was granted, it cannot help seeming like a personal betrayal. But his deeper betrayal is of the historical record. By insinuating himself illegitimately into his narrative, by deliberately fusing fact and fiction, Morris has been untrue to his calling as a biographer and historian.

What makes this particularly lamentable is that Morris's performance is by no means a rare exception. Indeed, in his cavalier approach to the historical record, Morris reveals himself only too clearly as a product of his age. It is a defining feature of our "postmodern" era that truth is everywhere held in contempt. I am not talking about anything arcane: just plain, factual truth, as in, "The Battle of Hastings took place in 1066."

It is easy enough to discount some of the more outrageous examples of the assault on truth. I daresay that few sensible people take seriously the claims of Holocaust deniers. What is significant, however, is the *way* in which such extreme doctrines tend to be dismissed. Increasingly, they are repudiated not as pernicious falsehoods but as more or less unfortunate "perspectives" or "points of view," the gospel being that everyone is "entitled" to his own hobbyhorse, no matter how flagrantly at odds with the truth it might be. Never mind that such an attitude not only disparages truth, but also erodes the legitimacy of serious opinion.

Take the recent movies directed by Oliver Stone. Anyone who looks into the matter knows that Stone's portrayals of Presidents Kennedy and Nixon are exercises in (left-wing)

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political fantasy. Yet the popularity of such movies testifies not to the political commitments of those who patronize his movies, but to the public's capacious appetite for historical "reconstruction": that is, its appetite for history glamorized and minus the burdensome requirement to tell the truth—history, to put it in a word, "lite." Morris's book reminds us that this vice is not confined to the political Left.

There are no doubt many reasons for this development. One important reason is the degree to which Western intellectual elites—in the media, the world of culture, and, above all, the academy—have reneged on their commitment to truth. This abdication has a long and complex heritage. And it comes in many forms and degrees of finality, from trial separation to, in extreme cases, irrevocable divorce (epitomized,

Elites have reneged on their commitment to the truth. This book is one result.

for example, by the title and contents of Paul Feyerabend's book on the philosophy of science, *Anything Goes*). As always in the world of ideas, what matters is not so much the existence, but the influence and prevalence of such commitments. Morris is a popular biographer whose work has reached many thousands. His new book suggests that the cavalier attitude toward historical truth has reached epidemic proportions—has in fact become part of the intellectual furniture of our age, something presupposed rather than argued for.

One sign of this situation is the horror with which the idea of "objective truth" is regarded in certain academic circles today. Another is the widespread tendency to downgrade facts to matters of opinion—a tendency that follows naturally from the rejection of objective truth. This shows itself in the amazingly prevalent assumption that truth is "relative," i.e., that the truth of what is said depends crucially on the interests, prejudices, and even the sex or ethnic origin of the speaker, rather than on—well, than on the truth or falsity of what the speaker says. The basic idea is that truth is somehow invented rather than discovered. Typical of this position is the feminist complaint about "male-centered" epistemologies that make false claims to universality (another word that inspires panic) or objectivity.

The historian Simon Schama provided a more genteel expression of this attitude toward truth in the afterword of his bestselling harlequinade *Dead Certainties* (1991). "The claims for historical knowledge," Schama assured his readers, "must always be fatally circumscribed [*fatally* circumscribed, mind you] by the character and prejudices of its narrator." In other words, the limitations of the historian make the achievement of historical truth impossible. How many college-educated people today would dare to dissent from this assertion? Schama was at pains to deny that his was a "naïvely relativist position"; yet at bottom, his claim is little more than a chummy periphrasis for Nietzsche's famous declaration of nihilism: "There are no facts, only interpretations." This is a gospel that Morris has wholeheartedly embraced in his new book.

The irony that attends this triumph of interpretation over facts is that it ultimately undermines opinion just as thoroughly as it undermines fact. When facts are downgraded to opinions, they no longer have the authority of facts; but opinions without the bedrock of facts deliquesce into whims. As Hannah Arendt observed in her essay "Truth and Politics," opinion remains opinion only so long as it is grounded in, and can be corrected by, fact. "Facts," she wrote, "inform opinions, and opinions, inspired by different interests and passions, can differ widely and still be legitimate as long as they respect factual truth. Freedom of opinion is a farce unless factual information is guaranteed and the facts themselves are not in dispute." What is at stake in the confusion of fact and opinion, Arendt concluded, is nothing less than the common world of factual reality and historical truth.

It will be pointed out that truth is very often difficult to achieve, that facts are often hard to establish, that the historical record is incomplete, contradictory, inaccessible. Yes. Precisely. But the recalcitrance of truth is all the more reason we need to remain faithful to the procedures for achieving it: Without them, we are blind. In a famous passage in *The Republic*, Plato has Socrates say that "to be deceived about the truth of things and so to be in ignorance and error and to harbor untruth in the soul is abhorred above everything." Edmund Morris has neglected that warning to his readers' disservice and his own diminishment. **NR**

Body Count

Population and its enemies.

STEPHEN MOORE

At a Washington reception, the conversation turned to the merits of small families. One woman volunteered that she had just read Bill McKibben's environmental tome, *Maybe One*, on the benefits of single-child families. She claimed to have found it "ethically compelling." I chimed in: "Even one child may put too much stress on our fragile ecosystem. McKibben says 'maybe one.' I say, why not none?" The response was solemn nods of agreement, and even some guilt-ridden whispers between husbands and wives.

McKibben's acclaimed book is a tribute to the theories of British economist Thomas Malthus. Exactly 200 years ago, Malthus—the original dismal scientist—wrote that "the power of population is . . . greater than the power in the earth to produce subsistence for man." McKibben's application of this idea was to rush out and have a vasectomy. He urges his fellow greens to do the same—to make single-child families the "cultural norm" in America.

Now, with the United Nations proclaiming that this month we will surpass the demographic milestone of 6 billion peo-

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ple, the environmental movement and the media can be expected to ask: Do we really need so many people? A recent AP headline lamented: "Century's growth leaves Earth crowded—and noisy." Seemingly, Malthus has never had so many apostles.

In a rational world, Malthusianism would not be in a state of intellectual revival, but thorough disrepute. After all, virtually every objective trend is running in precisely the opposite direction of what the widely acclaimed Malthusians of the 1960s—from Lester Brown to Paul Ehrlich to the Club of Rome—predicted. Birth rates around the world are lower today than at any time in recorded history. Global per capita food production is much higher than ever before. The "energy crisis" is now such a distant memory that oil is virtually the cheapest liquid on earth. These facts, collectively, have wrecked the credibility of the population-bomb propagandists.

Yet the population-control movement is gaining steam. It has won the hearts and wallets of some of the most influential leaders inside and outside government today. Malthusianism has evolved into a multi-billion-dollar industry and a political juggernaut.

Today, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID), the State Department, and the World Bank, the federal government pumps some 350 million tax dollars a year into population-containment activities. The Clinton administration would be spending at least twice that amount if not for the efforts of two Republican congressmen, Chris Smith of New Jersey and Todd Tiahrt of Kansas, who have managed to cut off funding for the most coercive birth-reduction initiatives.

■

Activists say they support reproductive freedom. But in at least 35 countries, 'family planning' has involved coercion.

■

Defenders of the U.N. Population Fund (UNFPA) and other such agencies insist that these programs "protect women's reproductive freedom," "promote the health of mothers," and "reduce infant mortality." Opponents of international "family planning," particularly Catholic organizations, are tarred as anti-abortion fanatics who want to deprive poor women of safe and cheap contraception. A 1998 newspaper ad by Planned Parenthood, entitled "The Right Wing Coup in Family Planning," urged continued USAID funding by proclaiming: "The very survival of women and children is at stake in this battle." Such rhetoric is truly Orwellian, given that the entire objective of government-sponsored birth-control programs has been to invade couples' "reproductive rights" in order to limit family size. The crusaders have believed, from the very outset, that coercion is necessary in order to restrain fertility and avert global eco-collapse.

The consequences of this crusade are morally atrocious. Consider the one-child policy in China. Some 10 million to 20 million Chinese girls are demographically "missing" today because of "sex-selective abortion of female fetuses, female infant mortality (through infanticide or abandonment), and selective neglect of girls ages 1 to 4," according to a 1996 U.S. Census Bureau report. Girls account for over 90 percent of the inmates of Chinese orphanages—where children are left to die from neglect.

Last year, Congress heard testimony from Gao Xiao Duan, a former Chinese administrator of the one-couple, one-child policy. Gao testified that if a woman in rural China is discovered to be pregnant without a state-issued "birth-allowed certificate," she typically must undergo an abortion—no matter how many months pregnant she is. Gao recalled, "Once I found a woman who was nine months' pregnant but did not have a birth-allowed certificate. According to the policy, she was forced to undergo an abortion surgery. In the operating room, I saw how the aborted child's lips were sucking, how its limbs were stretching. A physician injected poison into its skull, and the child died and was thrown into the trash can."

The pro-choice movement is notably silent about this invasion of women's "reproductive rights." In 1989, Molly Yard, of the National Organization for Women, actually praised China's program as "among the most intelligent in the world." Stanford biologist Paul Ehrlich, the godfather of today's neo-Malthusian movement, once trumpeted China's population control as "remarkably vigorous and effective." He has congratulated Chinese rulers for their "grand experiment in the management of population."

Last summer, Lisa McRee of *Good Morning America* started an interview with Bill McKibben by asking, in all seriousness, "Is China's one-child policy a good idea for every country?" She might as well have asked whether every country should have gulags.

Gregg Easterbrook, writing in the Nov. 23, 1998 *New Republic*, correctly lambasted China for its "horrifying record on forced abortion and sterilization." But even the usually sensible Easterbrook offered up a limp apology for the one-child policy, writing that "China, which is almost out of arable land, had little choice but to attempt some degree of fertility constraint." Hong Kong has virtually no arable land, and 75 times the population density of mainland China, but has one of the best-fed populations in the world.

These coercive practices are spreading to other countries. Brian Clowes writes in the *Yale Journal of Ethics* that coercion has been used to promote family planning in at least 35 developing countries. Peru has started to use sterilization as a means of family planning, and doctors have to meet sterilization quotas or risk losing their jobs. The same is true in Mexico.

In disease-ridden African countries such as Nigeria and Kenya, hospitals often lack even the most rudimentary medical care, but are stocked to the rafters with boxes of contraceptives stamped "UNFPA" and "USAID." UNFPA boasts that, thanks to its shipments, more than 80 percent of the women in Haiti have access to contraceptives; this is apparently a higher priority than providing access to clean water, which is still unavailable to more than half of the Haitian population.

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A Demilitarized Palestinian State

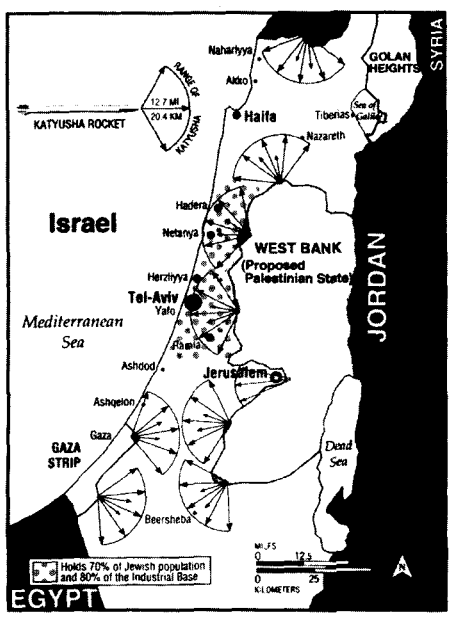
Should Israel, should the world, rely on it?

Even those most sanguine about the Oslo Accord, the understanding between Israel and the Palestinians, are agreed that the Palestinian entity to be formed will have to be demilitarized. A demilitarized Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and Gaza Strip, it is believed, would obviate any military threat to the state of Israel.

What are the facts?

Israel threatened by enemies. Israel is a very small country. Including the Golan and the "West Bank," it is only one-half the size of San Bernardino County in California. Israel has been in a "cold peace" with Egypt since 1978 and has also concluded a peace treaty with Jordan. Other Arab states are still in a declared or undeclared state of war with Israel. Iran, Moslem though not Arab, is the most determined and deadly of them all. It lurks in the background, its foremost military and political objective being the destruction of the state of Israel.

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), with which Isreal's Rabin government has signed a "peace agreement," is a terror organization that has only one purpose: to kill Jews and to destroy the state of Israel. While the latter objective is beyond its reach, it has been most successful in the former. It seems almost incomprehensible that a group as supposedly level-headed as a previous government of Israel would have entered into a "peace agreement" with such an organization. Unfortunately, though not surprisingly, events since the famous "handshake" confirm such skepticism. Despite statements to the contrary, the PLO has still not complied with Israel's main requirement, namely that it forswear the clauses in its "covenant" that call for the destruction of Israel. Arafat and his lieutenants continue to make blood-curdling speeches to the Arab public, beyond Western TV cameras, in which they re-assert their old goal of destroying Israel in "stages"—first by creating a Palestinian state to foment an allied all-out assault against the critically vulnerable Jewish state.



A Palestinian state—demilitarized?

The myth of demilitarization. The assumption that "Palestine" would be demilitarized is not tenable. The Arab nations would not allow it, even if the Palestinians themselves so desired. Also, the Palestinian entity would have thousands of trained soldiers, camouflaged as police. They could be helicoptered in minutes to positions on the border with Israel, with armored forces from Syria reaching them within the same night. But such mobilization of the "demilitarized" Palestine wouldn't be required. The weapons of preference of Arab terrorists are the Soviet-made Katyushas, highly effective missiles, truck-mounted and mobile, ideal for hit-and-run raids against Israel. Israel could not prevent them from flooding Palestine. A look at the map makes clear that these rockets, short-range though they may be, would dominate the heartland of Israel. Easily moved and hidden along Israel's new eastern borders—to be increased from less than 40 miles in length to over 200 miles—these Katyushah rockets would rain destruction over most of Israel. They would cover in their entirety Israel's narrow waist that holds 70% of the Jewish population of the country, 80% of its industrial base, its only international airport, and its most important military installations.

The Arabs living in Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") danced on the roofs of their homes when Iraqi Scud missiles fell on Tel Aviv during the Gulf War. Since the signing of the "peace agreement" they have continued to engage in terror and murder against the Jews. Only incurable optimists can believe that an independent Palestine would become a peaceful neighbor of Israel. If Israel ceded the Gaza Strip—the invasion route since before biblical times—and Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") to its sworn enemies it would make the country indefensible and Israel would have laid the groundwork for its own destruction. Tanks, warplanes, and missiles would only be needed for the final mopping-up process. In the meantime, mortars and Katyushas located on the Judean ridges—Israel's proposed new borders—would suffice to paralyze life and industrial and military activity in Israel. One can only hope that ultimately Isreal's leaders will clearly understand this danger and that they will not make concessions that will endanger the security of their country.

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Population-control groups like Zero Population Growth and International Planned Parenthood have teamed up with pro-choice women in Congress—led by Carolyn Maloney of New York, Cynthia McKinney of Georgia, and Connie Morella of Maryland—to try to secure $60 million in U.S. funding for UNFPA over the next two years. Maloney pledges, "I'm going to do whatever it takes to restore funding for [UNFPA]" this year.

Support for this initiative is based on two misconceptions. The first is the excessively optimistic view that (in the words of a *Chicago Tribune* report) "one child zealotry in China is fading." The Population Research Institute's Steve Mosher, an authority on Chinese population activities, retorts, "This fantasy that things are getting better in China has been the constant refrain of the one-child apologists for at least the past twenty years." In fact, after UNFPA announced in 1997 that it was going back into China, state councillor Peng Peiyun defiantly announced, "China will not slacken our family-planning policy in the next century."

The second myth is that UNFPA has always been part of the solution, and has tried to end China's one-child policy.

■

Overpopulation is a hoax. That's why there is no moral, economic, or environmental case for small families—period.

■

We are told that it is pushing Beijing toward more "female friendly" family planning. This, too, is false. UNFPA has actually given an award to China for its effectiveness in population-control activities—activities far from female-friendly. Worse, UNFPA's executive director, Nafis Sadik, is, like her predecessors, a longtime apologist for the China program and even denies that it is coercive. She is on record as saying—falsely—that "the implementation of the policy is purely voluntary. There is no such thing as a license to have a birth."

Despite UNFPA's track record, don't be surprised if Congress winds up re-funding it. The past 20 years may have demonstrated the intellectual bankruptcy of the population controllers, but their coffers have never been more flush.

American billionaires, past and present, have devoted large parts of their fortunes to population control. The modern-day population-control movement dates to 1952, when John D. Rockefeller returned from a trip to Asia convinced that the teeming masses he saw there were the single greatest threat to the earth's survival. He proceeded to divert hundreds of millions of dollars from his foundation to the goal of population stabilization. He was followed by David Packard (co-founder of Hewlett-Packard), who created a $9 billion foundation whose top priority was reducing world population. Today, these foundations are joined by organizations ranging from Zero Population Growth (ZPG) to Negative Population Growth (which advocates an optimal U.S. population size of 150 million—120 million fewer than now) to Planned Parenthood to the Sierra Club. The combined budget of these groups approaches $1 billion.

These organizations tend to be extremist. Take ZPG. Its board of directors passed a resolution declaring that "parenthood is not an inherent right but a privilege" granted by the state, and that "every American family has a right to no more than two children."

"Population growth is analogous to a plague of locusts," says Ted Turner, a major source of population-movement funding. "What we have on this earth today is a plague of people. Nature did not intend for there to be as many people as there are." Turner has also penned "The Ted Commandments," which include "a promise to have no more than two children or no more than my nation suggests." He recently reconsidered his manifesto, and now believes that the voluntary limit should be even lower—just *one* child. In Turner's utopia, there are no brothers, sisters, aunts, or uncles.

Turner's $1 billion donation to the U.N. is a pittance compared with the fortunes that Warren Buffett (net worth $36 billion) and Bill Gates (net worth roughly $100 billion) may bestow on the cause of population control. Buffett has announced repeatedly that he views overpopulation as one of the greatest crises in the world today. Earlier this year, Gates and his wife contributed an estimated $7 billion to their foundation, of which the funding of population programs is one of five major initiatives.

This is a massive misallocation of funds, for the simple reason that the overpopulation crisis is a hoax. It is true that world population has tripled over the last century. But the explanation is both simple and benign: First, life expectancy—possibly the best overall numerical measure of human well-being—has almost doubled in the last 100 years, and the years we are tacking on to life are both more active and more productive. Second, people are wealthier—they can afford better health care, better diets, and a cleaner environment. As a result, infant-mortality rates have declined nearly tenfold in this century. As the late Julian Simon often explained, population growth is a sign of mankind's greatest triumph—our gains against death.

We are told that this good news is really bad news, because human numbers are soon going to bump up against the planet's "carrying capacity." Pessimists worry that man is procreating as uncontrollably as John B. Calhoun's famous Norwegian rats, which multiply until they die off from lack of sustenance. Bill McKibben warns that "we are adding another New York City every month, a Mexico every year, and almost another India every decade."

But a closer look shows that these fears are unfounded. Fact: If every one of the 6 billion of us resided in Texas, there would be room enough for every family of four to have a house and one-eighth of an acre of land—the rest of the globe would be vacant. (True, if population growth continued, some of these people would eventually spill over into Oklahoma.)

In short, the population bomb has been defused. The birth rate in developing countries has plummeted from just over 6 children per couple in 1950 to just over 3 today. The major

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Welcome to St. Scaredycat's Catholic Community

You're new in the suburbs and it's Sunday morning, so you and your spouse drive over to the nearest Catholic church — uh, make that *community*. You walk into the modern cement structure and are accosted by a GREETER (so says the sticker stuck on his shirt), who welcomes you with a moist handshake. You proceed to a pew, genuflect, and reach down for the kneeler. No kneeler! Hmm. So you kneel on the linoleum floor, but in so doing bang your chin on the pew in front of you. Half-dazed, you just sit down.

Time to get your bearings. You look around — no statuary, no crucifix, no Stations of the Cross, no Tabernacle, no stained-glass windows. Ah, but how 'bout those felt banners with Latin sayings!

Alas, no, actually it's Pig Latin — no doubt an attempt to be relevant to the Younger Generation.

After the band is warmed up, the cantor announces from behind her conga drums that the "presider" today will be Father Bud, who, after boogying up the center aisle clapping his hands to the beat, belts out to the half-empty multi-purpose auditorium, "Hiii, evvvrybodddy!" And the audience yells back, "Hiii, Buuudd!"

Since the Penitential Rite is omitted, you're quickly into the Scripture readings. No Pig Latin here! Now you're into Feminese — "God our Father/Mother" and all that jive.

Then the homily. You're hungry for guidance. One of your daughters is sleeping with her boyfriend, your son is deeply into pot, and your ailing mother wants her doctor to give her a lethal injection. So, what do you hear? "We must be nonjudgmental and inclusive, for God accepts everyone just as she or he is." Then an announcement: "At the donut hour after the liturgy, our Gay and Lesbian Support Group will show a video about alternative lifestyles."

Since the Creed is not recited, you're into the Eucharistic Prayer in no time, with your pew-mates standing up for their rites (or "rights"), arms outstretched like the presider's. At the Sign of Peace the band breaks into lounge music for ten minutes of chatting, laughing, and backslapping. Next on the program, says Bud, is Sister Sam. Suddenly a grizzled nun bursts out of the sacristy in purple leotards. After she prances around a bit, Bud leads a big round of applause.

Then, finally, Communion. Bud retires to his cushioned Presider's Chair (isn't that where the Tabernacle usually is?) as four women wearing plastered smiles distribute Communion. Then Bud rises and boogies out.

As you proceed to your car, *still* half-dazed, you wonder: Why is this "Catholic community" so enthralled by our tawdry culture, *so afraid to be Catholic*?

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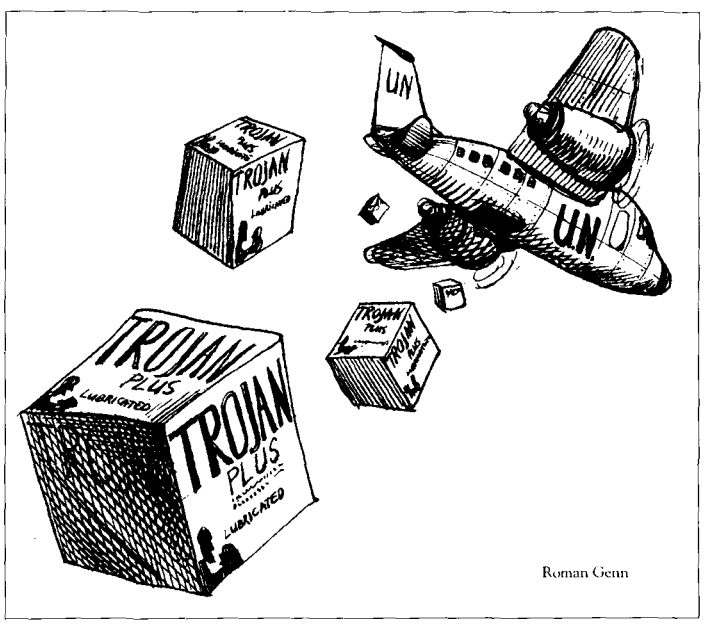
explanation for smaller family sizes, even in China, has been economic growth. The Reaganites were right on the mark when, in 1984, they proclaimed this truth to a distraught U.N. delegation in Mexico City. (The policy they enunciated has been memorably expressed in the phrase "capitalism is by far the best contraceptive.") The fertility rate in the developed world has fallen from 3.3 per couple in 1950 to 1.6 today. These low fertility rates presage declining populations. If, for example, Japan's birth rate is not raised at some point, in 500 years there will be only about 15 Japanese left on the planet.

Other Malthusian worries are similarly wrongheaded. Global food prices have fallen by half since 1950, even as world population has doubled. The dean of agricultural economists, D. Gale Johnson of the University of Chicago, has documented "a dramatic decline in famines" in the last 50 years. Fewer than half as many people die of famine each year now than did a century ago—despite a near-quadrupling of the population. Enough food is now grown in the world to provide every resident of the planet with almost four pounds of food a day. In each of the past three years, global food production has reached new heights.



Overeating is fast becoming the globe's primary dietary malady. "It's amazing to say, but our problem is becoming overnutrition," Ho Zhiqiuan, a Chinese nutrition expert, recently told *National Geographic*. "Today in China obesity is becoming common."

Millions are still hungry, and famines continue to occur—but these are the result of government policies or political malice, not inadequate global food production. As the International Red Cross has reported, "the loss of access to food resources [during famines] is generally the result of intentional acts" by governments.

Even if the apocalyptic types are correct and population grows to 12 billion in the 21st century, so what? Assuming that human progress and scientific advancement continue as they have, and assuming that the global march toward capitalism is not reversed, those 12 billion people will undoubtedly be richer, healthier, and better fed than the 6 billion of us alive today. After all, we 6 billion are much richer, healthier, and better fed than the 1 billion who lived in 1800 or the 2 billion alive in 1920.

The greatest threat to the planet is not too many people, but too much statism. The Communists, after all, were the greatest polluters in history. Economist Mikhail Bernstam has discovered that market-based economies are about two to three times more energy-efficient than Communist, socialist, Maoist, or "Third Way" economies. Capitalist South Korea has three times the population density of socialist North Korea, but South Koreans are well fed while 250,000 North Koreans have starved to death in the last decade.

Government-funded population programs are actually counterproductive, because they legitimize command-and-control decision-making. As the great development economist Alan Rufus Waters puts it, "Foreign aid used for population activities gives enormous resources and control apparatus to the local administrative elite and thus sustains the authoritarian attitudes corrosive to the development process."

This approach usually ends up making poor people poorer, because it distracts developing nations from their most pressing task, which is market reform. When Mao's China established central planning and communal ownership of agriculture, tens of millions of Chinese peasants starved to death. In 1980, after private ownership was established, China's agricultural output doubled in just ten years. If Chinese leaders over the past 30 years had concentrated on rapid privatization and market reform, it's quite possible that economic development would have decreased birth rates every bit as rapidly as the one-child policy.

The problem with trying to win this debate with logic and an arsenal of facts is that modern Malthusianism is not a scientific theory at all. It's a religion, in which the assertion that mankind is overbreeding is accepted as an article of faith. I recently participated in a debate before an anti-population group called Carrying Capacity Network, at which one scholar informed me that man's presence on the earth is destructive because *Homo sapiens* is the only species without a natural predator. It's hard to argue with somebody who despairs because mankind is alone at the top of the food chain.

At its core, the population-control ethic is an assault on the principle that every human life has intrinsic value. Malthusian activists tend to view human beings neither as endowed with intrinsic value, nor even as resources, but primarily as consumers of resources. No wonder that at last year's ZPG conference, the Catholic Church was routinely disparaged as "our enemy" and "the evil empire."

The movement also poses a serious threat to freedom. Decisions on whether to have children—and how many—are among are the most private of all human choices. If governments are allowed to control human reproduction, virtually no rights of the individual will remain inviolable by the state. The consequence, as we have seen in China, is the debasement of human dignity on a grand scale.

Another (true) scene from a party: A radiant pregnant woman is asked whether this is her first child. She says, no,

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full of tension, excitement, suspense and realism. *The Redhunter* is as much a compulsive page-turner as any Stephen King or Tom Clancy thriller."

—**Caspar Weinberger**, *Forbes*

"This is an honorable and absorbing book. . . . The tone is elegiac throughout. There is no polemic here, no apologia . . ."

—**Charles McCarry**, *New York Times*

"Reads like a thriller and has the gritty quality of history, and may well become in the popular mind a picture of the way things actually went."

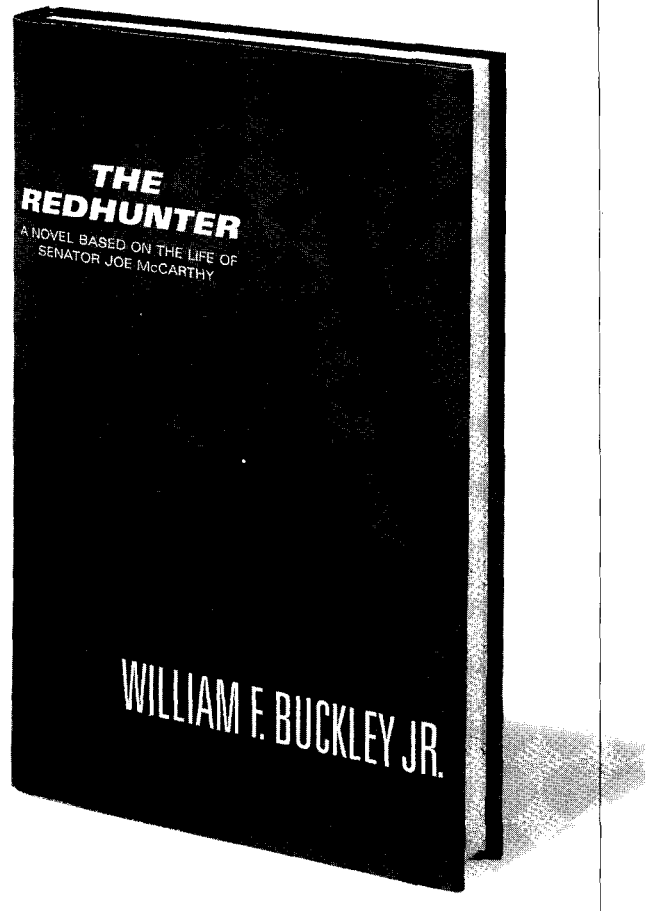
—**Herbert Kenny**, *The Boston Irish Reporter*

"The book is a genuine page-turner. And it gives a vivid portrait of Joseph McCarthy. . . . [A] highly enjoyable novel-with-attitude."

—**Geoffrey Wheatcroft**, *The Wall Street Journal*

"An ingeniously symmetrical drama of the origins and psychology of communism and anti-communism."

—**Lance Morrow**, *Time*



"Only a wordsmith of William F. Buckley's caliber could try, and largely succeed, in depicting Joe McCarthy as an engaging, sympathetic, and ultimately tragic figure. Buckley's McCarthy is a rogue but not a loathsome enemy of freedom. Even liberals who grow faint at the thought of any kind word about McCarthy will enjoy the pacing and suspense of an engrossing story with many twists and turns."

—**Robert Novak**, *The Weekly Standard*

"Mr. Buckley has provided in *The Redhunter* a remarkable fable of the life and times of Joe McCarthy, portraying with narrative vigor the well-known highlights of this belligerent protagonist's half-decade career in America's headlines. The result is a true page-turner. Mr. Buckley has humanized his subject without exonerating him from harsh historical judgments."

—**Allen Weinstein**, *The Washington Times*

***THE REDHUNTER • A Novel Based on the Life of Senator Joe McCarthy* by William F. Buckley Jr.**

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in fact, it is her sixth. Yuppies gasp, as if she has admitted that she has leprosy. To have three kids—to be above replacement level—is regarded by many as an act of eco-terrorism.

But the good news for this pregnant woman, and the millions of others who want to have lots of kids, is that the Malthusians are simply wrong. There is no moral, economic, or environmental case for small families. Period.

If some choose to subscribe to a voluntary one-child policy, so be it. But the rest of us—Americans, Chinese, and everybody else—don't need or want Ted Turner or the United Nations to tell us how many kids to have. Congress should not be expanding "international family planning" funding, but terminating it.

Congress may want to consider a little-known footnote of history. In time, Thomas Malthus realized that his dismal population theories were wrong. He awoke to the reality that human beings are not like Norwegian rats at all. Why? Because, he said, man is "impelled" by "reason" to solve problems, and not to "bring beings into the world for whom he cannot provide the means of support." Amazingly, 200 years later, his disciples have yet to grasp this lesson. **NR**

The Rocket Boys

Missile defense on its way.

JOHN J. MILLER

INSIDE the rear of a tan Army Hummer, a technician sat in a black swivel chair and stared at a computer screen. It was still dark out at 5:19 in the morning, local time, but he could see everything in the skies above the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico. Bright green lines outlined neighboring states and marked friendly units on his electronic map. Suddenly, a red triangle blipped onto the monitor. A radar positioned nearby had picked up an object launched from the north. The computer quickly identified it as a threat and calculated its course. The man lightly touched a black trackball attached to his keyboard, moved a pointer on the screen to the triangle, and clicked.

A missile blasted into the pre-dawn sky, launched from a canister mounted on a truck a few hundred yards away. It broke the sound barrier several times over as it roared upward. In a matter of seconds, it was miles above the desert floor. A booster rocket burned up and blew off, leaving only a five-foot-long kill vehicle hurtling toward its target. Then a shroud at its tip fell away to reveal an infrared seeker. The missile literally opened its eyes and spotted its goal: a Hera rocket simulating a Scud. A few thrusts from motors on the interceptor's side set the two projectiles on a collision course. They hit head-on, sparking a brief but brilliant flash. Then darkness returned to the sky. Except for a few small scraps of twisted metal plummeting downward, nothing was left. The missiles had vaporized. On the ground, 40 miles below, people cheered.

In that moment, a missile-defense program lingering at death's door found new life. A long record of failure had made the Army's Theater High Altitude Area Defense system (THAAD) look like a billion-dollar boondoggle. Even the program's strongest supporters were starting to wonder whether THAAD (which rhymes with "dad") was terminally flawed. Its enemies took perverse delight in its difficulties, comparing missile defense to the quixotic pursuit of cold-fusion power. The Pentagon, by many accounts, was getting ready to pull the plug. But a team of engineers persevered with the help of corporate, military, and political allies. The test flight on June 10 was a moment of glory for them, reversing years of frustration. "We didn't just hit it in the bull's-eye," says Ed Squires, THAAD's program manager at Lockheed Martin. "We hit a ten-ring in the black."

More important, THAAD's success demonstrated that the United States has the technical know-how to defend itself against ballistic-missile attacks. THAAD probably won't reach the field for seven or eight years, but the engineers behind the June intercept achieved a signal success in the country's struggle to build a comprehensive missile-defense system. "Test Flight 10 will be remembered as the most significant milestone in missile-defense development this decade," says Army Lt. Gen. David K. Heebner.

That might never have happened if Squires and his team of rocket boys had not seized control of the troubled program last year. THAAD was built by dozens of companies, but its ultimate success depended on a handful of engineers in Building 151, an anonymous gray-and-white structure on the Lockheed Martin campus in Sunnyvale, Calif. "We knew the technology would work," says Army Maj. Gen. Peter C. Franklin, deputy director of the Pentagon's Ballistic Missile Defense Organization. "It was simply a matter of Lockheed Martin putting the right people in place to look at the hardware."

Well, there was more to it than that. Even now, missile defense has its enemies. The very idea is anathema to many of those presently in charge of American national security. Test bans and international monitoring, they think, will keep the United States safe. An aggressive missile-defense strategy would merely encourage a worldwide arms build-up. One of the first things they did following President Clinton's inauguration was change the name of the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization to the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization. "They were downgrading its importance," says a former member of the organization—"and trying to repudiate Ronald Reagan." It was Reagan, after all, who had proposed an ambitious missile defense in his March 23, 1983, speech.

The THAAD program won't provide the kind of broad anti-missile coverage that defense hawks have craved since Reagan addressed the nation. It's a *theater* system rather than a *national* system, meaning that it targets short- and medium-range ballistic threats rather than intercontinental ones. It couldn't defend a territory the size of the United States from a missile launched on the other side of the globe,

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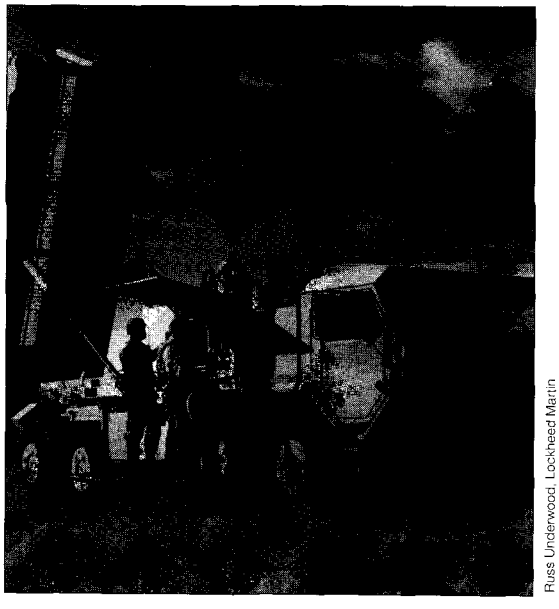
but it could protect troops in South Korea or a country the size of Israel or Taiwan from a neighbor. That makes THAAD a vital member of the family of missile-defense systems now on the Pentagon's drawing board. There will eventually be more glamorous weapons, such as airborne lasers and bigger and faster interceptors with longer ranges (such as the missile tested successfully over the Pacific Ocean on October 2). But today, THAAD is the most sophisticated piece of America's embryonic missile-defense network—a network that has survived thanks largely to political pressure from conservatives.

The need for THAAD became more obvious than ever during the Gulf War. Scud missiles allowed Saddam Hussein to sit in his underground bunker and terrorize Israel and Saudi Arabia. Although Patriot missiles were initially celebrated for their ability to disable Scuds, later assessments revealed that the defensive umbrella they were supposed to provide actually leaked like a sieve. On February 25, 1991, a Patriot failed to knock out a Scud heading for Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. It slammed into American barracks, killing 28 soldiers.

Congress and President Bush responded by calling for a missile-defense system that would protect American troops from ballistic threats. From the start, however, Clinton administration officials have suggested that THAAD violates that linchpin of Democratic arms-control ideology, the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. They have even forced the system to downgrade its radar performance—despite no complaints about it from Russia. In 1996, the White House stripped THAAD of $2 billion because of its early problems, ignoring the fact that test programs must go through a trial-and-error process. THAAD became a rallying point for opponents of national missile defense. As Democratic senator John Kerry of Massachusetts put it last March, "THAAD is much simpler to develop" than national missile defense; so if *it* doesn't work, how can larger programs possibly succeed?



Russ Underwood, Lockheed Martin

THAAD's first three flight tests, all in 1995, went well. But they were easy. They didn't even try to hit a target. Instead, they demonstrated launch capabilities, booster separation, and radar performance. By the third one, most of the system functioned properly. It was at last time to shoot something out of the sky.

That's when the problems began. For three and a half years, THAAD would hit nothing. During Test Flight 4, in December 1995, a software error caused the missile to veer off course and run out of fuel. The following March, in Test Flight 5, an electrical harness didn't disengage properly, and the missile self-destructed in flight. In July, THAAD's heat-seeker failed to spot its target. Eight months later, a motor failure led to another miss. The program stopped testing for more than a year and underwent an extensive review. Then it launched Test Flight 8 in May 1998—but a short circuit in the booster rocket caused the missile to lose control. It self-destructed six seconds after takeoff. Five misses in 29 months.

With each miss came a flurry of statements from professional Doubting Thomases at disarmament groups. "Maybe

■

The system's mobile radar is strong enough to sit in Washington, D.C., and spot a basketball hovering over Chicago.

■

Mother Nature's trying to tell us something," said John Pike of the Federation of American Scientists, absurdly. For THAAD supporters, these were bleak days. "This latest failure was unpardonable," said Rep. Curt Weldon, a Pennsylvania Republican, after Test Flight 8. Lockheed Martin agreed to pay up to $75 million in fines if it continued missing, and the Pentagon considered canceling its contract with the company outright. Meanwhile, the Clinton administration showed that it had more faith in the ABM treaty than in its own missile program, volunteering all sorts of information about THAAD and other weapons to the Russians without receiving anything in return. "They thought they were being good neighbors," says one former member of the American treaty team. "But you have to believe these people get ripped off every time they buy a car or house."

An independent review suggested that THAAD's design was sound, but that Lockheed Martin's poor quality control allowed a series of low-tech bugs to escape detection. The company brass decided it was time for a management change. Enter Ed Squires, a Lockheed Martin engineer with a history of helping to fix dying programs. A tall man with bright blue eyes and a Louisville twang, Squires is modest to the point of discomfort at the slightest hint of praise. He bristles at the suggestion that he saved THAAD. For his first interview with NATIONAL REVIEW, he insisted on surrounding himself with four colleagues so each could share credit. Yet THAAD supporters routinely laud Squires for reviving the program. "Lockheed Martin basically bet a portion of the company on him," says Army Lt. Gen. Paul Kern, one of the Pentagon's top acquisitions officers. Squires, however, praises his predecessors, the people who oversaw the five straight misses. "We learned something on every one of those flights," he insists.

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"The public tends to think it's useless when you miss a target, but that's not true."

Squires knew that, on paper, THAAD was an impressive system. It operates from the backs of four Hummers linked by cables. Its mobile radar is strong enough to sit in Washington, D.C., and spot a basketball hovering over Chicago. Computers determine the trajectories of incoming missiles and decide which are worth hitting. If one is headed for open water or a deserted area, THAAD may not want to waste a shot. THAAD also has "look-shoot-look" capability, allowing it to fire on targets at a distance great enough to permit one or two follow-up shots in the event of a miss.

The interceptor is launched from a ten-missile canister mounted on the back of an all-terrain vehicle the size of a fire truck. Each of the vehicle's ten big wheels is articulated for sharp turns and skirting through minefields. A hydraulics system raises the launch platform skyward; after ten shots, the canister is cast aside like an empty shotgun shell, and the truck reloads itself from a trailer without the help of other vehicles. A THAAD missile launch is so hot that soldiers must move several hundred feet away from their truck to avoid incineration.

Russ Underwood, Lockheed Martin

The 19-foot missile actually saves its greatest thrust for when it's several hundred feet in the air and won't burn up the truck launcher below. A single-stage rocket engine hurls the missile upwards. Its top elevation is classified, but during Flight Test 11 in August it soared more than 60 miles above the ground. "It can go many times higher," says Col. Patrick O'Reilly, the Army's THAAD project manager. The missile acquires all of its momentum from this booster, which pushes the five-foot kill vehicle to supersonic speeds before separating.

The kill vehicle, the part of the missile designed to slam into a target and destroy it, is at once the simplest and most complicated part of the system. It contains no explosives, relying instead on the raw kinetic energy of its high speed to obliterate a ballistic missile. With an infrared seeker and directional thrusters, the kill vehicle homes in on its target. Just as the best way to break a rack in pool is to shoot the cue ball slightly off center, THAAD prefers an aimpoint just down from the target's tip. A hit there ensures maximum lethality. It's also where the warhead is kept, including any payload of nuclear, biological, or chemical devices.

Squires worked on THAAD for almost a year before running his first flight test. The stakes were high, with Lockheed Martin ready to pay millions back to the government for another failure. THAAD's enemies were sharpening their knives. Then last March, Squires watched the skies above White Sands in anticipation. His missile blasted upwards. He waited for the intercept, which should have come in about two minutes. The flash of light never materialized. THAAD had missed its target by about 30 feet.

The culprit was another motor failure in the kill vehicle. THAAD came under more pressure than ever before. The government sent Lockheed Martin a bill for $15 million. Liberals took to the floor of Congress. "Hit-to-kill technology is nowhere near feasible," said Rep. Tammy Baldwin, Democrat of Wisconsin. Both the Pentagon and Lockheed Martin were encouraged by the near miss, but THAAD was becoming desperate for a hit.

Squires returned to Sunnyvale and his office, with its odd decorations—dramatic photos of rockets and missiles in the company of Monet reprints. "You have to learn from the mistakes," he explained to his team. "I know it's hard to show up for work the morning after a failure, but we have to get another one of these up right away."

That day came on June 10, when THAAD smashed into the rocket high in the atmosphere. An even tougher test occurred two months later, with THAAD targeting a missile in outer space—a much more complex shot. But on August 2, THAAD became the first field-ready missile system to hit a ballistic target above the atmosphere. "I guess today is probably one of the watershed events in the technological history of our country, because today . . . we basically hit a bullet with a bullet in outer space," said Air Force Lt. Gen. Ronald T. Kadish at a press briefing.

The rocket boys will now spend the next several years focusing on reliability and production. Their challenges are far from over. Shortly after their success in outer space, Pentagon official Philip E. Coyle III labeled the tests "scripted"—a quote the *Los Angeles Times* trumpeted in a front-page headline on August 24. Later, however, Coyle retreated from this characterization—a correction that the *Times* duly failed to note. Also in August, *Scientific American* surrendered six of its pages to an article written by arms-control lobbyists called "Why National Missile Defense Won't Work." It made no mention of the latest THAAD tests. The system is facing budget hurdles, too: This summer, the House Appropriations Committee reduced its funding. Many of the program's supporters believe the money will soon be restored, but they're puzzled that THAAD, previously punished for failure, is now apparently guilty of success.

Opinion polls suggest that most Americans believe that the United States already has missile-defense capabilities. If the formidable opponents of missile defense have their way, the public will continue to be mistaken. If programs like THAAD are given enough support, however, they will eventually—perhaps within the next ten years—prove the people right. **NR**

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GOVERNOR GEORGE W. BUSH
AUSTIN, TEXAS

October 3, 1999

Hey, Pop!

Thanks a mil for the terrific advice in re: the whole Christian Coalition thing. Went there and did my Jesus thing and the whole bit and it went over gangbusters. Got Pat Robertson eating menudo out of my hand, practically. Do you keep up with him? Maybe give him a call or something?

I gotta say, Dad, that you've been a brick about the whole Pat Buchanan situation, which is pretty much Delicate City time, as you know. We Bushes are forgiving types, I know, but I thought it was going to be pretty hard to beg him to stay in the party and all. He's a nasty little bug and he hates your bag of bones a whole heck of a lot, and he tired us out in '92—kinda cost us the whole damn thing, if you ask me. So to even contemplate the thought of the hypothesis of making nice nice to him almost knocked me right on my big fat compassionate, if you'll pardon my français.

But when it came to actually doing it, it was a breeze, just like you said it would be. I did just what you told me—think about all the stuff you have to do and say to get elected, and then remember that kissing Pat Buchanan's you-know-what is probably one of the easier things, and before I knew it, I was puckering up like some kind of crazy kissing machine.

So here's my thought. Now that I'm in the kissing booth, as it were, maybe I should go after the other short S.O.B. in Dallas and make all nice kissy face with him? Just head down to Perot's office and put on the GWB ooze?

You know, I went to Hollywood and pretty much wowed 'em. I got 40 million fish sitting in the money-market just waiting for Gore or Bradley. I mean, since I've got the time to blow smoke up one guy's coolie, why not make it a two-fer?

Big hearty handshake—

George W.

THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON, D.C.

October 3, 1999

Dear Rusty:

Greetings from Nashville!

Well, actually, I'm still in Washington. But I'll be making monthly trips back to Nashville, and I'll be on a Nashville–Washington, D.C., conference call almost daily! You see, we moved the whole campaign team to Nashville, Tennessee.

I'll be honest, Rusty. Before the move, the campaign wasn't going too well. We'd gotten into a rut, started thinking with blinders on, and become too "inside Washington" and not enough "great big heartland." It was time for radical change.

It's called "thinking outside the box," Rusty. It's a way of opening a window and letting some fresh air in. Tony Coelho came up with it. And if anyone has a fresh, outside-the-Beltway approach, it's him.

Of course, there was the whole "why Tennessee?" question. It's a beautiful state, of course, but it's not really "home" in the same way that, say, Room 807 in the Fairfax Hotel is.

I've always believed that home is where the heart and the memories are. Home is where the streets are familiar and the smell of the leaves in autumn reminds you of Mom and Dad and playing touch football in the park with Dad's driver and the hotel staff. I guess what I'm saying, Rusty, is that for me, home will always be Washington, D.C. That's the place that keeps me grounded and real.

I told all this to Tony. He was very sympathetic. Then he leaned in and whispered, "If it makes you feel any better, the Nashville office is going to be mostly interns." "Really?" I asked. He nodded. "All the strategists and consultants and media planners—and me, of course—are going to stay here, where we have our homes and families and usual tables at The Palm. Don't worry," he said, "you won't be alone." "Thanks, Tony," I said.

He's a great guy! I'm lucky he's staying here, in Washington, where I need him.

Write soon,

Al

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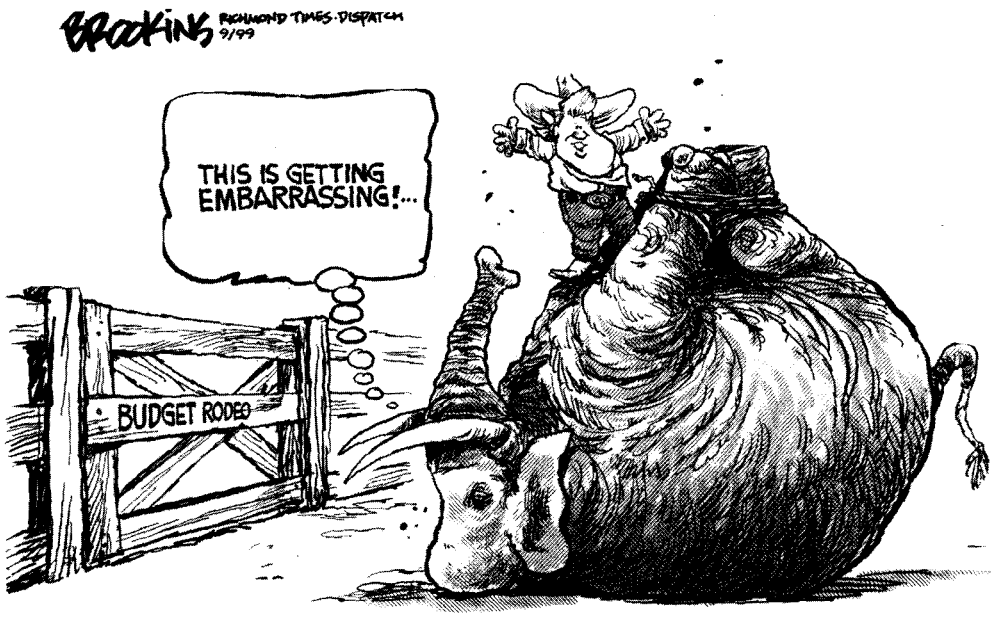

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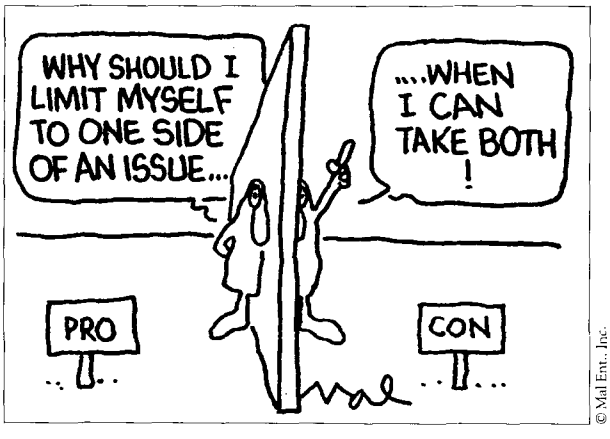
"Ah, to make a mockery of justice, just once!"

Rothco Syndicate

"It will all be worthwhile if it stops just one young person going into advertising."



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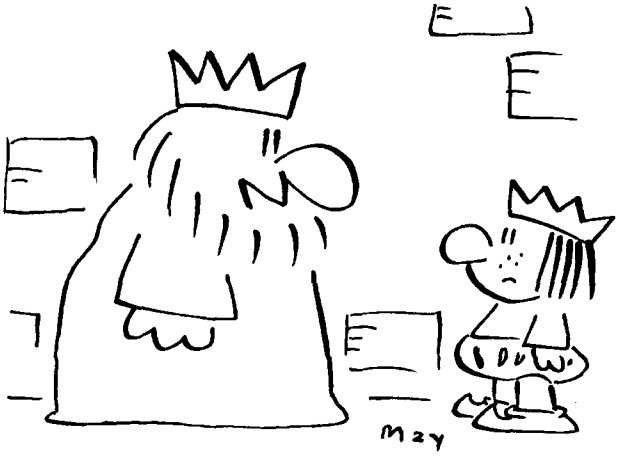

"Nothing comes easily in this life, son—you have to tax it away from people."

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BOOKS, ARTS & MANNERS

Guy Talk

MIDGE DECTER

Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Male, by Susan Faludi (Morrow, 662 pp., $27.50)

SIX years ago, as she tells us in her new book, Susan Faludi was moved to explore the question of why "our male brethren so often and so vociferously resist women's struggles toward independence and a fuller life." In seeking an answer, she set off on a truly strenuous round of travels, meeting with and interviewing and re-interviewing a wide variety of men. And since only one year before undertaking this mission she had published a much celebrated feminist tract, *Backlash*, the result of Faludi's quest promised to be of no small interest, above all to her habitually anti-male loyal readers and sisters.

Now we have her findings, published under the title *Stiffed*, and depending on the fierceness of their loyalty to the founding tenets of their movement, her fellow feminists may or may not feel enlightened by them. For as the book's title suggests, in the end Faludi came to believe that American men have been just as much victimized by their society—well, make that *almost* as much—as women.

Essentially, Faludi finds that American men have been betrayed by two forces in their lives. The first of these is their fathers, whose discovery of genuine brotherhood while serving in the armed forces during World War II, of mutual support and protection and, yes, love and hope, was a legacy they failed to pass along to their sons. The second force is what Faludi calls the culture of "ornamentalism," by which she means that, just as women's lives have been

Midge Decter's last piece in NR was "Crimes du Jour," about "hate crimes."

Susan Faludi by Roman Genn

confined and corrupted by the surrounding culture's demand that they be physically attractive, so men's lives today are being constricted and corrupted by the demand that they, too, be "ornamental." In their case, this means to have for themselves, and to be able to produce for others, all that success and money can buy.

Now, Susan Faludi is clearly a conscientious and hard-working journalist, and, judging from the things her subjects were willing to confide to her, a skilled one as well. She also writes quite entertainingly. And if it is sometimes difficult to understand the relevance of certain of her observations to the point that she believes she is making, what bestselling reporter shall 'scape whipping on that score?

The interviewees whose experiences allegedly opened Faludi's eyes to the oppression of the American male included men who without question had sad tales to tell. Most prominent among these were men who had lost their jobs as a result of cuts in the military budget or corporate downsizing, and were having difficulty finding new ones as pleasing or as suited to their abilities. Other interviewees, however, suffered from considerably more complex conditions, if that is even the right term. For instance, there were the men seeking help in controlling their propensity for violence, particularly against their wives and children, and there were others who had joined Promise Keepers in the hope that they might find some way to prevent their wives from leaving them.

A rather different kind of case involved boys who were members of a group called the Spur Posse, whose main avocation was keeping the score of their impressively numerous sexual encounters, and whose disappointed hope, first encouraged by certain national talk-show hosts, was to become media stars. Still others included in Faludi's circle of sympathetic attention were a gang of government-haters called The Patriots, who wept with outrage at the ATF-*cum*-FBI raid on Waco; a group of male porn stars, worried about their capacity to perform on demand; Buzz Aldrin, whose life had been affected by the fact that he was the second rather than the first astronaut to set foot on the moon; a South Central Los Angeles gang-banger called Monster who wrote a briefly famous book about himself; a desperately disillusioned Vietnam veteran who had served under Lt. William Calley, of My Lai fame; a student antiwar protester; the obligatory group of homosexuals, whose careers as editors happened to engage them in standing the "ornamentalism" of the culture on its head and who, in Faludi's eyes, were the only ones who had found the means of offering one another some much-needed brotherly support; and, for some reason truly difficult to fathom, Sylvester Stallone, who had been saddened by the reception accorded some of his recent films.

All of these specimens of male misery and disappointment are granted their full day in court. The book is conse-

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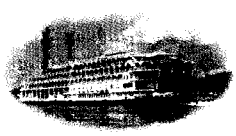

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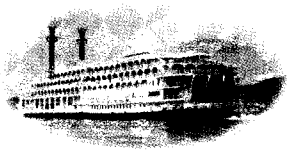

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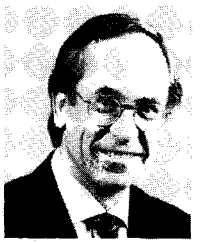
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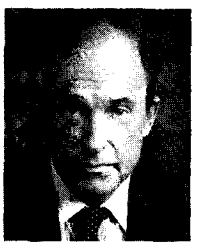
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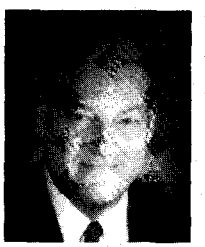
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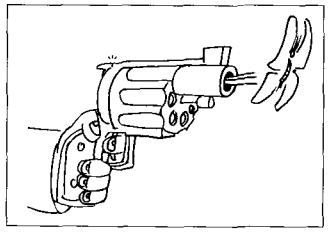
quently rather hefty, and since Faludi so clearly believes that her general analysis covers every case, it also tends to be somewhat repetitive. In the end, the most amusing and congenial—and, by the same token, most truly puzzling—presence in these pages is a bunch of madly devoted lifelong Cleveland Browns fans who had served for years as a kind of collective team mascot and who became distraught when the Browns were sold out from under them. (One inevitably suspects that the author, sympathetic as she may pretend to be, harbors a retrograde girlish view about the mental and moral feebleness of male sports fanatics.)

All in all, they make an odd collection, especially for use in the service of a thesis, even a two-headed thesis like Faludi's. Quite clearly—with the exception of the Browns fans, who after not too long a delay were able to welcome a new team to Cleveland, and Sylvester Stallone, who hit upon an idea for a new movie script that made him happy—not one man among them has at this time found a reason to be even minimally satisfied with life. The polls tell us that there are many men in America who are generally satisfied with their lot. But in this project, any such man would have had to be kept entirely offstage, for the obvious reason that his story might have undermined the very *raison d'être* of the entire undertaking.



Even so, the author's failure to choose a representative sample of men is not her book's most serious shortcoming. That honor must be reserved for her account of what is bothering the men she did choose. Because the major problem with Susan Faludi's attempting to bring her newfound brothers into the once exclusively female society of victims is that, in her effort to do so, she has finally achieved little more than to raise the volume on that most tiresome and least enlightening form of human expression. I am referring to the Whine.

For example, no doubt some men who are the sons of the World War II generation—in other words, children of the '50s, that most famous of all American cohorts—were indeed neglected by their fathers. But the truth is that the fathers of the immediate postwar generation were on the whole very busy trying to earn the money with which to house and feed their families. This was, *pace* some assertions made about them later by their wives and children, no easy undertaking. And perhaps sometimes even a boring and/or unpleasant one. The economy was just then struggling into gear. No new housing had been built for many years, and there was a truly serious shortage. Certain amenities now taken for granted had not even been put into production. At the same time, the massive slaughter of the war through which the world had just passed had induced in everyone a powerful impulse to bring forth new life.

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Stiffed is Faludi's attempt to bring her newfound brothers into the once exclusively female society of victims.

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Those communities of uniform little houses served by uninviting little strip malls, derided in song and story by snooty '60s radicals and now subject to a fair amount of snooty comment by Susan Faludi as well, were places slapped up in a hurry to accommodate all those sprouting new families—in fact, to provide inexpensive housing for all the young couples who could not then afford better (hardly, one would have thought, either a tasteless or heartless undertaking). Many of the men now retroactively charged with neglect were working by day and going to school by night, or vice versa, in order to be better prepared to earn their way. Someone who really wanted to know what was bothering the men of that generation might consider that they were people who had down through the years been striving to meet the demands of their families—and then awakened one morning to find their wives and daughters accusing them of all kinds of brutality, and setting at naught their time-honored contribution to both the family and society.

And the fathers' bewilderment was probably nothing as compared with the bewilderment that later on was to overtake their sons, who, no matter how they strove to please the females in their lives, were always found wanting. It is not at all hard to imagine that these sons would one day be most relieved to lay the blame for their discomfiture at the feet of their fathers. And how pleased Faludi must have been to believe them. For the blaming of fathers makes it possible to bring to all her sisters in liberation the message of their own complete and utter blamelessness for any of the men's alleged indifference to women's unhappy lot.

As for her analysis of the role of the ornamental culture in everyone's unanswered prayers, that bit of theory in various guises is so old and dried up by now that it requires crutches even to move off the dusty page. For one thing, this culture is the result of, and in turn feeds on, a kind and degree of prosperity never before in human existence even dreamed of (a prosperity, by the way, of which the reader will find not even a passing mention in these many, many pages). That we have not yet learned how to live at ease with such wealth—or learned the lesson that, whatever else it can do, it cannot answer the deepest spiritual questions—goes without saying. But on the other hand, we do well to bear in mind that no one forces male porn stars to value themselves primarily for their private endowment—no more than anyone forces women, even putatively liberated ones, to dress and carry themselves as they do for a maximum degree of sexual enticement. After all, we grown-up human beings help to make, as well as participate in, the world of values in which we live.

The idea that something called "the culture" has forced one to live as one lives—in other words, that we are not free and responsible for ourselves—constitutes the very heart of the theory of Women's Liberation. That Susan Faludi is now willing to invite men to take shelter beneath this theory is the very opposite of the compassion for their troubles that she feigns. For being encouraged to whine about some species of "them"—fathers, bosses, the government, the culture—is, as we have been witnessing for many years now, only the means for

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achieving an ever-growing and ever-more-bewildered discontentment.

What men need above all is the simple recognition of their full and necessary value in the lives of women. Such a recognition would go a very long way toward the healing understanding that this book and its author claim to seek.

A lot of men have indeed been "stiffed." But until Susan Faludi understands that as a loyal feminist she has done her own goodly share of the stiffing, her researches will have virtually nothing to teach us. **NR**

Sowell's Plain Truths

JAY NORDLINGER

The Quest for Cosmic Justice, by Thomas Sowell (Free Press, 214 pp., $25)

THOMAS SOWELL has a large reputation, but not large enough: He is a greater thinker and writer than is generally recognized. As a public intellectual, he wears many hats. He writes a syndicated column, full of punchy conservatism and libertarianism. He churns out book after book, on history, social policy, and philosophy, almost all of them meant for a mass of readers. And he has in his corpus a number of purely academic works—Sowell is an economist. If he kept out of the gritty world of journalism and confined himself to Olympian tracts, would the Establishment (for lack of a less petulant and whiny word) accord him his due? Perhaps. But Sowell, a whirlwind, would be loath to give up any of his pursuits, and for the praise of the Establishment, few could care less.

Hard as it is for many of us to believe and accept, Sowell is nearly 70 now. He grew up in North Carolina and Harlem, and studied at Howard, Harvard, Columbia, and Chicago. At this last institution, he was a student of two free-market titans, Milton Friedman and George Stigler. One of his more remarkable books is *Ethnic America*, published in 1981, a history of immigration and social relations among the diverse Americans. If it is not yet a standard text, it should be. His 1985 book, *Marxism*, is an exceptionally useful treatment of that critical ideology. Sowell's trademark, in all of his writings, is clarity of thought, which leads to clarity of language, which leads to a most illuminating reading experience. He is a destroyer of cant, a cutter through the fog.

Consider a sampling from his recent columns: After another in a string of domestic atrocities, Sowell wrote, "First of all, these are not 'senseless' shootings. They are expressions of hatred that disregard morality and common decency, but they are very rationally planned and executed." After Gov. Bush's speech on school vouchers, he wrote, "Let's go back to square one. [Sowell is forever going back to square one; it is possibly his favorite place.] What is the money there for? To educate students. And if 10 percent of the students leave the public-school system and take 10 percent of the money with them, how does this make any less money available per student among those remaining in the public schools?"

In a column about Pat Buchanan, Sowell could be found—as usual—decrying the sloppy use of terms: "It does no good to scare people with bogeyman words like 'trade deficit' and 'debtor nation.' The benefits of international trade do not depend on whether you have more imports or exports. . . . The United States has been a debtor nation for most of its history—and it has had the highest standard of living in the world for most of its history." And here is a classic Sowell locution, from a column on Bush and the barrage of questions about cocaine use: "The only way to stop this is to stop it." Sowell has the immense learning of the devoted scholar he is, but he talks like a police commissioner or Kiwanis speaker. That is what makes him so bracing, and helps to drive his opponents mad.

His latest book may be regarded as a summa. It offers barely 200 pages, but it is the burnished product of a lifetime of thinking, arguing, refining, and—in essence—getting it straight. The book takes the form of four essays; its opening piece, "The Quest for Cosmic Justice," provides the book's title.

Sowell goes back to square one and feels little need to venture much farther—there is so much work to be done there. He had been fiddling with a paper on concepts of justice for many years, without ever feeling that he had expressed himself with adequate clarity. Then, "in the spring of 1996, some particularly sophomoric remarks by one of my [academic] colleagues not only provoked my anger but also convinced me that there was a real need to untangle the kind of confusions that could lead any sensible adult to say the things he had said." So Sowell retreated to his keyboard and knuckled down. He obvious-

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Sowell's trademark is clarity of thought, which leads to clarity of language, which leads to a most illuminating reading experience.

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ly feels a sense of mission: He despairs that so many of us fail to grasp basic ideas and terms, and he considers it downright dangerous that Americans in general do not appreciate the principles on which their freedom, which they rightly and loudly cherish, is founded.

Sowell is impatient to set forth definitions. If we do not speak a common language, how can we even begin to converse? "Social justice," he notes, is a leading passion of this age. But the term is rather flabby. "All justice," he writes, "is inherently social. Can someone on a desert island be either just or unjust?" (To himself and to God, and to others in his thought, perhaps.) Now, "traditional justice"—the proper kind of justice, suited to the here and now—is primarily a matter of process: Are the rules fair and clear, and administered impartially? Has the citizen "had his day in court"? Can he truly be said to have "had his chance"? If so, then justice, to the extent that human beings are capable of rendering it, has been done.

But then there is "cosmic justice," the quest for which, according to Sowell, is

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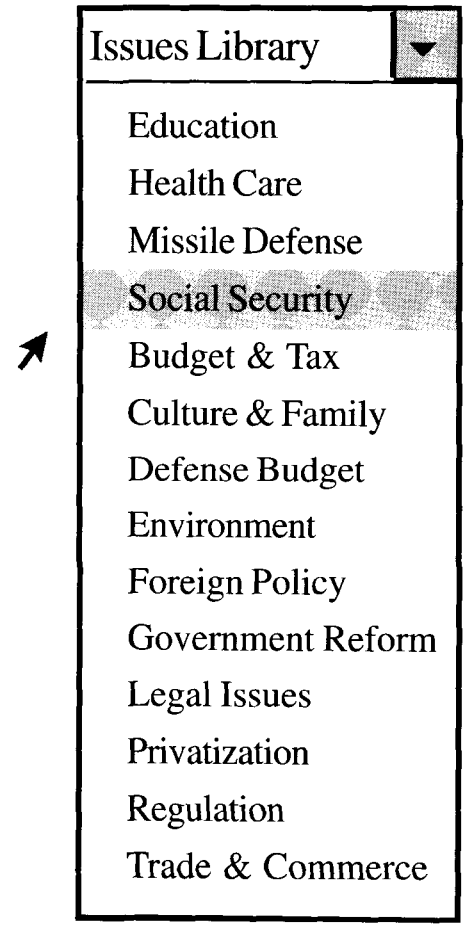

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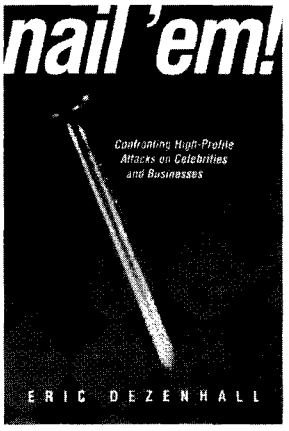

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the source of so much of our woe. This notion of justice is drenched in abstraction, concerned with the world as we might choose to refashion it from scratch, with no one smarter or luckier or more beautiful or healthier or more virtuous than anyone else. In one of his core passages, Sowell writes that "traditional justice involves the rules under which flesh-and-blood human beings interact, while cosmic justice encompasses not only contemporary individuals and groups, but also group abstractions extending over generations, or even centuries." It would be nice, for example, to punish the people responsible for slavery, and to compensate, somehow, their victims. But "time and death cheat us of such opportunities for justice, however galling that may be." So what are we prone to do instead? We "create new injustices among our flesh-and-blood contemporaries for the sake of symbolic expiation, so that the son or daughter of a black doctor or executive can get into an elite college ahead of the son or daughter of a white factory worker or farmer"—and only the truest believers in "the vision of cosmic justice" could possibly "take moral solace from that."

Sowell's ensuing chapters are "The Mirage of Equality," "The Tyranny of Visions," and "The Quiet Repeal of the American Revolution," a haunting title. In this final essay, he returns forcefully to first things, certainly to American first things—the meaning of the Revolution, the letter and importance of the Constitution. He reminds us—and this book is chiefly for the purpose of reminding—that the Revolution gave "the common man a voice, a veto, elbow room, and a refuge from the rampaging presumptions of his 'betters.'" The difference between the search for normal, realizable justice and the quest for cosmic justice is, roughly, that between the American and the French revolutions. Sowell's principal complaint is that, in recent decades, America has been seduced by the French model. To him, Bastille Day is nothing to celebrate.

That title—about repealing the American Revolution, quietly or not—may at first seem alarmist, but Sowell makes a solid and sober case. He cites Lincoln's insight that "men of sufficient talent and ambition" will always rise up to try to thwart free government, determined as they are to impose their own visions of the just society on one already ordered, by a constitution that declares all men free and equal. Sowell points to abuses in almost every area of American life, particularly the judiciary. He takes care to say that the specifics of individual cases are of little importance compared with "the general erosion of the rule of law itself." He notes, for instance, that *New York Times* columnist Anthony Lewis praised Harry Blackmun for "focusing the most on the actual people whose lives were touched by [particular] cases." But what Sowell wants near-desperately for us to understand is that "those affected by Supreme Court decisions include all who are affected by the stability, reliability, and just application of laws"—which is to say, "everyone in the whole society."

Pretty simple stuff—but no less vital for that. In fact, vital because of that.

In these bold pages, every Sowellian characteristic is on display. He is the master of the pertinent, often devastating, fact (many of them relating to race). He is often tart, without crossing the line into unattractive sarcasm. (An eight-year study of people and their incomes showed marked upward mobility—which should come as no surprise, because, to begin with, "people are eight years older at the end of eight years.") And Sowell is a gifted epigrammist. Many of his finest, most memorable sentences begin with, "In short . . ." On seeing those words, we may expect a little gem. ("In short, the truth often seems 'simplistic' by comparison with elaborate attempts to evade the truth.")

The Quest for Cosmic Justice is a cold shower of a book. It reminds conservatives (or, if one prefers, authentic liberals) why they are that way in the first place. It rouses them from their laziness of mind and tongue. Many years ago, it was joked that Sowell and Walter Williams (also a black conservative economist) should not be permitted to ride in the same plane together. Maybe Thomas Sowell should not be allowed to fly at all. **NR**

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Strange Victory

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

Five Days in London, May 1940, by John Lukacs (Yale, 236 pp., $19.95)

BETWEEN the fall of France and Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union, Britain alone resisted the military triumph of Nazism. Prime Minister Winston Churchill, it has been generally accepted, was responsible for this defiance. But historical revisionism is a very wonderful thing. Writers, including professional historians, have been chipping away at Churchill's reputation. Victory, they like to argue, cost Britain its empire and world-role. It would have been reasonable, and less expensive, to come to a deal with Hitler. In this perspective, Churchill was self-defeatingly stubborn, to be deplored rather than admired.

With learning and passion, John Lukacs defends the orthodox view that Churchill was a very great man. He had understood that Hitler was a new kind of ruler, who had merged nationalism and socialism in a revolutionary way that was certain to destroy ordered society more thoroughly even than Communism. Without exactly explaining his fears, Lukacs gloomily hints that this new kind of rule today takes the form of global democracy, which seems to be leading to a collective and amoral Dark Age. "Civilization may survive," he writes, "at least in some small part due to Churchill in 1940." Britain could not have won the war—America and the Soviet Union did that—but as Lukacs puts it, "Churchill was the one who did not *lose* it." The holding operation was magnificent, and nobody else could have managed it.

At the time, it was touch and go. With perfect symbolism, Churchill succeeded Neville Chamberlain as prime minister on the day that Hitler opened his *Blitzkrieg* in the West. In a famous scene outside Buckingham Palace, Churchill's detective congratulated him. Tears came to Churchill's eyes as he answered, "I hope that it is not too late. I am very much afraid that it is. We can only do our best."

Through a pre-war policy of appeasing Hitler, Chamberlain and his foreign secretary, Lord Halifax, had proclaimed that they had brought about "peace in our time." This illusion had left the country unprepared for the ordeal ahead. National complacency and stuffiness were no defense against troops motivated by Hitler and Nazism. After two short weeks of the *Blitzkrieg*, the Germans had shattered the French army and trapped a quarter of a million British soldiers in and around the ports on the northern coast of France. Suddenly the perception dawned that this army in France might be lost altogether, and that Britain would then be invaded.

Mass Observation was an early experiment in taking polls, run by a group of sociologists and amateurs, and Lukacs uses its findings to show how public opinion was at the mercy of ignorance and panic. Summing up the rather fatalistic mood of the moment, Virginia Woolf wrote in her diary that the Germans seemed "youthful, fresh, inventive. We plod behind." The press conspicuously sup-

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pressed or misrepresented bad news. Few people had the means of judging whether defiance or surrender was the better course of action.

Hitler in fact gave orders to halt temporarily the advance towards the coastal ports. This may have cost him the war. If the British were spared humiliation, he calculated, their one rational choice would be to agree to his peace terms. He could not imagine that resistance to

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Between May 24 and May 28, 1940, history itself was in the balance, and Lukacs reconstructs these days with the immediacy of a thriller.

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Nazism was a moral absolute for Churchill. Ludicrously misjudging the issue, he was eventually to complain that he had refrained from annihilating the British at Dunkirk, but Churchill had been unable to appreciate "the sporting spirit" of a move designed to bring the countries together.

Between May 24 and May 28, history itself was in the balance, and Lukacs reconstructs these days with the immediacy and detail of a thriller, using a wide range of government and private papers. In that period, Belgium surrendered; and it became clear that France must shortly do the same. So alarming was that prospect that the euphemism "A Certain Eventuality" was coined for it in official circles. Paul Reynaud, the French prime minister, was confiding to Churchill that he himself might not last much longer in office. The presence in the French cabinet of Marshal Pétain was already a warning that collaboration with Hitler was imminent. Mussolini, it was known, intended to enter the war alongside Hitler. President Roosevelt was wary. Frivolous as ever, Mrs. Roosevelt wrote Churchill off as a "reactionary" while White House advisers like Sumner Welles and Harold Ickes thought he was a drunk. Openly contemptuous of Churchill, Ambassador Joseph Kennedy believed that Britain had no chance of winning the war.

Only a handful of people shared Churchill's vision of what was at stake for the world. One of them was George Orwell, writing at the time that he hoped that the British army in France "is cut to pieces sooner than surrender." Throughout his life, Churchill had expressed his opinions with a strength that bred distrust, even among Conservatives and undoubted patriots. Evelyn Waugh, for instance, was eager to fight Nazism, but jeered at Churchill and his style. A number of senior military men further believed that Churchill was responsible for a mounting fiasco. The chief of staff himself had to be sacked for defeatism. As if this was not serious enough, Churchill also had to face a political threat within his own inner War Cabinet, from Lord Halifax, still the foreign secretary.

As in a great Shakespearean drama, here was a personal confrontation upon which hung the fate of nations. It fascinates Lukacs. In the run-up to the war, Halifax had changed his mind about appeasing Hitler, but he did not see how the war could be won. A former Viceroy of India, unemotional by nature, he was high-minded as well as self-important. Churchill's qualities, he thought, were too often those of an adventurer and a hothead, and his colleagues were "gangsters." On the day after Churchill became prime minister, Halifax wrote to his son, "I hope Winston won't lead us into anything rash."

Defiance of Hitler in those final days of May 1940 looked rash to Halifax. He wanted to discover what terms Hitler was prepared to offer, and in that spirit he contacted possible intermediaries, some of them dubious, like the Italian ambassador in London. Churchill believed that such maneuvers were signs of weakness, certain to encourage Hitler in his view that the British were not determined to fight to the end. Feelers implied negotiation, and so capitulation. Along that road, he said, Britain would soon find itself a "slave state" in Hitler's Europe.

Halifax naturally argued that he was merely sounding out possibilities. Not exactly a defeatist, he nevertheless hinted that he might resign if Churchill refused to consider all options. A cabinet split in such a crisis was a very great danger. Had Churchill mismanaged things, and had the whole army been taken prisoner at Dunkirk, Halifax was the only plausible candidate for the role of a collaborationist British Pétain. In the event that Halifax and a peace party had replaced Churchill, then Roosevelt and Joe Kennedy, Pétain and Mussolini and Hitler himself would all have praised the way that British pragmatism had at the last moment warded off national suicide. Hitler might have gone on to achieve his aim of defeating Stalin, and the Thousand Year Reich would have set its lasting stamp upon the world.

This was not the usual sort of clash between the Left and the Right, Lukacs points out, but one between differing Rights. Broadly speaking, Halifax was the type of conservative who values continuity and self-interest, while Churchill was an aristocratic conservative, whose characteristic is to do what he believes right, whatever the consequences. In that sense, Orwell was another aristocrat. In the event, Churchill called a meeting of the entire cabinet to explain that "it was his duty to consider negotiations with Hitler," but he had rejected any such course of action on the grounds that it was "idle to think that, if we tried to make peace now, we should get better terms from Germany than if we went on and fought it out." The cabinet agreed. Halifax demurred, and soon afterwards was posted away as British ambassador to Washington. The peace party dissolved into the shadows.

At the end of that May, the great French historian Marc Bloch was temporarily evacuated to London. On his return home, he wrote an illuminating book, *Strange Defeat*. France had fallen, Bloch thought, for reasons hard to pin down, to do with loss of national morale, and a failure to define essential moral purposes. In Britain, circumstances might well have imposed Halifax and the logic of collaboration with Nazism. The army had to abandon its equipment in the rescue from Dunkirk. The country was virtually disarmed. The Germans had only to win the Battle of Britain in the air later that summer and the way was open for their invasion. The will and language of Churchill instead concentrated national morale and persuaded the British of the essential moral purpose of destroying Nazism. To Lukacs, this was a victory strange enough to seem providential. **NR**

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But Seriously

JONAH GOLDBERG

For Common Things: Irony, Trust, and Commitment in America Today, by Jedediah Purdy (Knopf, 226 pp., $20)

FOR COMMON THINGS is the longest very short book I've ever read. It's barely over 200 pages, and I feel like I've been taking the reading-comprehension portion of the SAT for a month. It's not that Jedediah Purdy isn't a very smart young man, and it's not that his observations are wildly off the mark. To the contrary, some of his arguments should be applauded by anybody who worries about the corrosive influences of postmodernism and rampant materialism. But good golly, Mr. Purdy takes himself seriously, and his earnestness is a perfect match for his eat-your-spinach prose.

If you don't know by now, Purdy is the "it" boy of the good-government Left. He is 24 years old and attends Yale Law School. He was home-schooled by his West Virginia hippie parents until the age of 13, when he was dispatched to Exeter and then Harvard. *The New York Times Magazine* has profiled him as the next Walter Lippman.

Full disclosure: Purdy thinks people like me—television-addicted, irony-drenched purveyors of cheap sarcasm and free-market idolatry—are what's sending this country down the tubes. Actually, his main bogeyman is Jerry Seinfeld. According to Purdy, the smirking comedian is "irony incarnate." By "refusing to identify strongly with any project, relationship, or aspiration," says Purdy, Seinfeld poisons contemporary politics and public life.

Above all, Purdy wants people to take politics—and perhaps Jedediah Purdy's political musings above all—very seriously. This is because, according to the author, politics is an expression of hope for the kind of world we want; thus irony must be Public Enemy Number One.

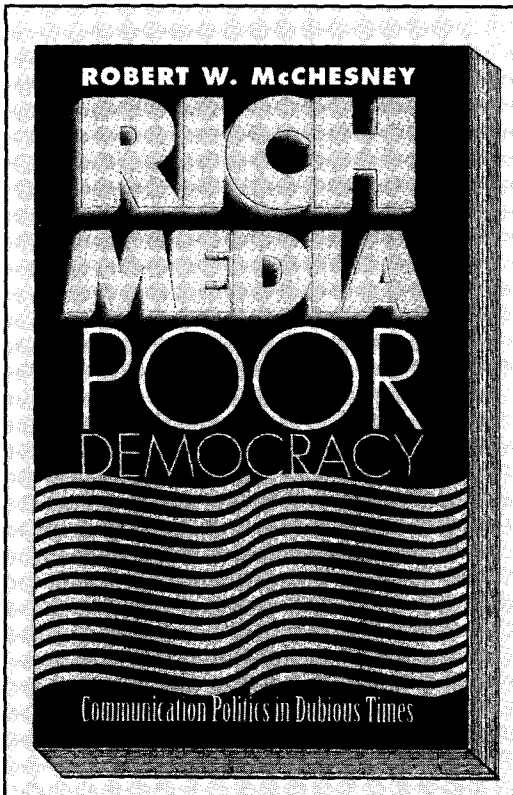
■

Purdy thinks people like me are what's sending this country down the tubes.

■

Irony "is powered by a suspicion that everything is derivative. It generates a way of passing judgment—or placing bets—on what kinds of hope the world will support." But Purdy also denounces career-oriented materialists, "free-agent" entrepreneurs, and everybody else he went to Harvard with who didn't mill around the post office like an expectant father waiting for the next issue of *The American Prospect*, the nation's most earnest political journal.

Mr. Goldberg is editor of *National Review Online* and a columnist for *Brill's Content*.



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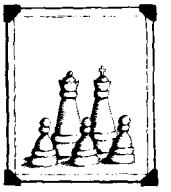
This is all very interesting in a conversation-by-light-of-the-lava-lamp sort of way, but eventually the reader wants to get past the keeping-hope-alive stuff and find out just what kind of politics—nay, what kind of world—Purdy wants. Well, cancel your appointments for the day because it takes a while to wade through the jargon, etymological tutorials, and insightfully allusive throat clearings. He doesn't want people to become obsessed with the "Promethean Politics" of Marx or Rousseau, though it would be unsurprising if he had busts of both men on his neat desk. He also sagely rejects the "therapeutic politics" of Clintonism and the "Prozac morality" of contemporary identity politics.

"I am not normally an admirer of schemata," he writes. Oh! But with the future of the world on the line, what's a little schematizing among friends? Purdy says people should look at the world, public life, politics, whatever, as three overlapping "ecological systems." The first is "moral ecology," which essentially means culture: our interpersonal habits, how and why we trust each other, our commitments, etc. The second is "broad social ecology," which relates to the arrangements of our institutions. And the third is the "natural world." These are the "common things" referred to in the title of the book.

But a hundred pages later, we're still asking: So, what kind of politics does Purdy want?



Well, as he eventually reveals, he wants good politics. *Nice* politics. Politics that maintain the hope that we can make the world better, and reflect a practical commitment to get our hands dirty and fix things. Purdy views government institutions the way medieval princes viewed the Church. Little people should depend on social-welfare programs, because such dependence is an expression of fraternal faith in our common toil. Or something. He doesn't get much more specific than that.

Purdy has been alternatively mocked and applauded by *liberals* for his pious gravity. It's true, there are times when this book reads like an extended whine from a high-school class president who can't understand why nobody shows up at his meetings. But no review I've read has pointed out the real problem with Purdy: his undiscriminating liberal nostalgia.

He introduces the book with a loving memoir of his childhood and tells us how he finds moral sustenance in his West Virginia upbringing and the life his parents made there. He constantly invokes writers, like Wendell Berry, who went home again and stayed there.

But if one can hardly object to his nostalgia for his earthy roots, Purdy's longing for mid-20th-century politics is more disturbing. He clearly feels he was born too late. His admiration for Thomas Mann and George Orwell—and the times they lived in—drips from every blocky sentence.

He seconds Orwell's 1946 assertion that it would be "nonsense" for a writer not to grapple with the battle between totalitarianism and democracy. That was absolutely true in Orwell's time. But, today? Purdy is so bent on returning to the glory days of vigorous politics, he's oblivious to the fact that no serious person would want to turn back the clock to the days of dark totalitarianisms—just for the sake of better conversation. It's as if peace and prosperity aren't worth the price of mushy politics.

In this respect, Purdy is a typical liberal. Throughout much of the 1990s, liberalism has been awash in nostalgia. Writers like Roger Rosenblatt, Alan Ehrenhalt, Paul Berman, and numerous others have turned their gaze backward to better, more politically serious times. President Clinton has spoken of his wish that he could be a wartime president like FDR. In 1993 he spoke wistfully of the Cold War, because back then we had a clear sense of who the bad guys and good guys were (this from a man who believed that America's efforts in the Vietnam War were evil).

Purdy even misses the angry politics of the early 1970s. Back then, he thinks, conservatives may have been "engaging in demagoguery" when they talked about McGovern's "creeping socialism," but at least the Left and Right were still having a real argument over "social and economic organization."

The sociologist Robert Nisbet wrote that nostalgia is "even at best the rust of memory, often a disease." If so, then Jedediah Purdy must be counted as a severely diseased young person. **NR**

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■ ART ■

Dung Deal

CRISTOPHER RAPP

'WHEN I first saw it, it scared me because, well, it's frozen human blood, but now I think it's the most powerful piece here."

Most visitors to the Brooklyn Museum of Art's "Sensation" exhibition seemed to prefer the works of headliner Damien Hirst—the 14-foot tiger shark floating in formaldehyde, perhaps, or the pig cut in half. But Anthony, a 29-year-old photographer, was making the case for Marc Quinn's sculpture *Self*—a self-portrait made from eight pints of the artist's own blood. Purplish-red, the head sits in a glass case, kept at a steady 9-below by a refrigeration unit. It looked to me like some kind of disgusting popsicle, but Anthony found it inspiring. "It speaks to the fragility of life. What if someone trips on the cord and unplugs it? It's telling me to go out and live my life and to keep going."

■

'The contents of this exhibition may cause shock, vomiting, confusion, panic, euphoria, and anxiety.'

■

With a grin, he offered a final thought: "And I was *born* Catholic."

That biographical detail was a winking reference to the protesters from the Catholic League and other groups who were outside the museum; to Mayor Rudolph Giuliani; and to the painting in the next room, Chris Ofili's *Holy Virgin Mary*—one outstanding feature of which is a clump of elephant dung.

Ofili's painting and the rest of the 90 or so pieces in "Sensation" are from the collection of Charles Saatchi, the British advertising magnate. Featuring works by young British artists, the exhibition has produced controversy—and long ticket lines—since opening at London's Royal Academy in 1997. As the title suggests,

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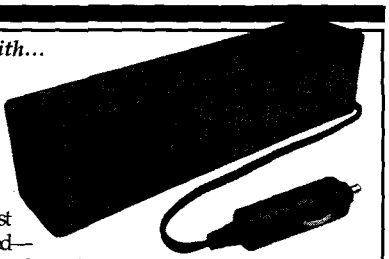

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the show is deliberately provocative: The museum is selling a line of "Danger Art" souvenirs, and a poster warning that "the contents of this exhibition may cause shock, vomiting, confusion, panic, euphoria, and anxiety."

Ten days prior to its opening, Giuliani pronounced the exhibit "sick" and promised to withhold the museum's $7.2 million in city funding—about a third of the Brooklyn Museum's budget—unless the show was canceled. Giuliani didn't object to the exhibit's being *seen*, just to the fact that it was being paid for with tax money. "You don't have a right to government subsidy for desecrating somebody else's religion," he said. Other Republicans only talk about fighting the culture war; Giuliani is actually in the trenches. Later, he said he would disband the museum's board of directors, and the city filed a lawsuit contending that the museum had violated its lease.

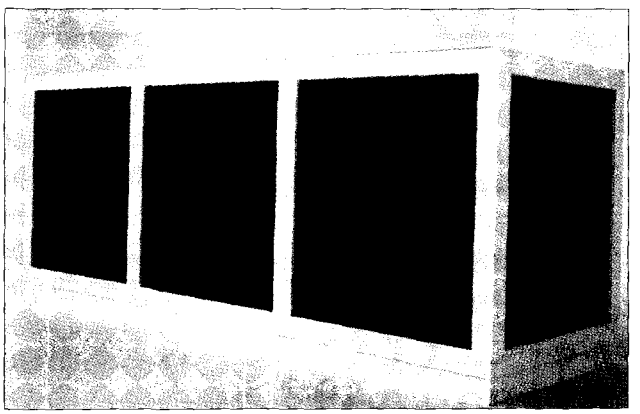
Now *that* was provocative. The *New York Times* editorial board objected that Giuliani's action "promises to begin a new Ice Age in New York's cultural affairs." In the space of one *Times* op-ed piece, playwright Jon Robin Baitz managed a trifecta—raising the specter of the Inquisition, Stalinist Russia, *and* Nazi Germany.

After I bade adieu to Anthony, it was time to take a look at Ofili's handiwork. The alcove containing *Mary* was jammed with people, as it would be all day. To safeguard against vandalism (two nights earlier a spirited protester had been caught throwing manure at the building), the museum had beefed up security: A museum guard, an armed police officer, and a Plexiglas shield kept onlookers from getting too close.

At first glance Ofili's work seems relatively unobjectionable—simply a stylized black Madonna, set off against a slightly trippy golden background. But the devil is in the details, specifically the clump of elephant dung at her right breast. Two more clumps, labeled VIRGIN and MARY, serve as supports for the painting. (Yes, it smelled.) And surrounding the figure are dozens of cutouts from pornographic magazines—women's backsides and vaginas—a fact all but ignored by the mainstream press (and omitted entirely by the *New York Times* review of the exhibit). Defenders of the exhibit took pains to point out, however, that Ofili discovered elephant waste while in Zimbabwe, where it is thought inoffensive; and that Ofili is himself a Catholic ("who attends church," added the *Los Angeles Times*). So what's the big deal?

"There is nothing wrong with this picture," said an elderly woman standing next to me. A snappily dressed younger woman from the front of the line told me she thought it was "painterly" and "beautiful." This was getting surreal.

I wandered on, past Ron Mueck's incredibly detailed sculpture of his deceased father, lying nude on the floor and lovingly titled "Dead Dad"; past Mona Hatoum's short movie, filmed with a fiber-optic camera, of her own esophagus; past the portrait of child-murderer Myra Hindley composed of child-sized handprints; past the table featuring fried eggs representing breasts and a meat patty representing female genitals. That, according to the artist, is how sexist male society views women.



Damien Hirst, The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living *(1991)*

It does seem to be how the Brooklyn Museum views women. I ended up at Jake and Dinos Chapman's display of mannequins representing little girls, nude except for matching Fila high-top sneakers. The girls stood in a circle, their torsos connected to one another like Siamese twins. This was creepy enough, but the Chapman brothers have added a special touch—some of the girls have erect penises instead of noses, anuses instead of mouths, and . . . well, you get the picture. A little later I saw two real-life girls, maybe 10 years old, walking around the mannequins and looking shell-shocked.

Attracting almost as many viewers as Chris Ofili's work was that of the *éminence grise* of this young crew, 34-year-old Damien Hirst, the man who gave us the shark-in-the-tank, the man who is the toast of London's art scene. The final large gallery of the exhibition was dominated by a little number he calls *Some Comfort Gained from the Acceptance of the Inherent Lies in Everything.* The work consists of two cows—who were already deceased when Hirst found them, as he has assured the PETA protesters who dog him at every show—sliced into twelve segments. Preserved in formaldehyde, the segments are stored in glass-and-steel tanks. The tanks are arranged like dominoes, and patrons are encouraged to walk among the tanks and inspect the cows' insides, an activity that the museum seems to think will inspire deep thoughts. "Take a close look at the cows' convoluted innards," reads the caption. "Their purpose seems unfathomable. . . . Does this suggest that, in a larger sense, our other ways of understanding the world around us are arbitrary and absurd?" From the lit-crit title and caption to the Beavis-and-Butthead-go-to-art-school execution, Hirst's cows perfectly summarize the aesthetic outlook of the exhibition.

I spotted a frazzled Baby Boomer emerging from the room with the tanks. His eyes looked dazed. "Heavy, man," he said. "*Heavy.*"

In contrast, 23-year-old Matthew, himself a budding artist, was overcome by the grandeur of the piece. "It's about the intensity of death itself," he told me. "We resist it, but death is a part of the universe—it's a part of life." I asked him what he thought of people who don't believe these artists have a right to government funding, and who complain about Ofili's depiction of Mary. "There are two types of people in the world," he said, "those who get it, and those who don't. It's not that they're bad people, they're just closed-minded."

His eyes widened as he turned to look at the cow parts. "It's very powerful for me, almost like a religious experience." **NR**

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■ FILM ■

Northern Exposure

JOHN SIMON

YOU may remember those old ads about not having to be Jewish to enjoy Levy's rye bread. Similarly, you need neither know nor care about ice hockey to have a good time at ***Mystery, Alaska***, a film about a tiny (fictional) Alaskan town that lives mainly for hockey. In the mystique of the game, the townsfolk, as players or fans, experience what theater meant to the ancient Athenians. We, in turn, are treated to, besides the joys of skating, the vicissitudes of small-town life up north, the magnificent mountains in back of the pond that serves as the hockey rink, and the visible breath emerging from mouths, attesting to the authenticity of location shooting, even if the location was Canmore, Alberta, rather than Alaska. After all, ice is smooth, and snow decorative, whatever their nationality.

The screenplay was co-written by two old Princetonians, friends and varsity hockey players. David E. Kelley was captain of the team; became the "creative force" behind such TV series as *Picket Fences*, *Chicago Hope*, *The Practice*, and *Ally McBeal*; and, to top it all, married Michelle Pfeiffer. Sean O'Byrne has been both an actor and a writing pupil of Kelley's, and 20 years after their graduation still plays hockey with his mentor. The film displays both television-writing skills—in juggling multiple stories with deftness and concision—and true knowledge of the sport. The actors, by the way, had to undergo a rigorous crash course in hockey, and did well.

The director, Jay Roach, best known for his dubious Austin Powers films and previously ignorant of hockey, rises valiantly to the occasion. Part of his achievement is adroit casting of American and Canadian actors, some against type, that paid off handsomely. The virile Australian star of *L.A. Confidential*, Russell Crowe, plays the stalwart John Biebe, sheriff of Mystery, whose woes include being superseded on the team by a younger player, and jealousy of his faithful wife, Donna, mother of his children, when the weaselly Charles Danner, her high-school beau, comes back to town.

Charles, one of Mystery's few non-skating males, has become a New York sportswriter who conceives the idea of an off-season exhibition game between the gallant home team and the champion New York Rangers, with the former benefiting somewhat from an open field, the pond, to which the Rangers wouldn't be accustomed. When the Rangers try to back out, Pruitt, the unorthodox, roly-poly lawyer, goes to New York to argue the case, with dramatic results for both Mystery and himself.

Before that, he had successfully defended young Stevie, Biebe's replacement on the team. Stevie had semi-inadvertently shot in the foot an advance representative of a megastore that is planning to open a branch in Mystery and thus threatens the small local businesses. Stevie's jailing would have similarly endangered the team's chances against the Rangers. Meanwhile, the town's blowhard mayor catches his wife *in flagrante* with Skank, the team's skirt-chaser. The stern judge, Walter Burns, a frustrated near-hockey-star of yore, disapproves alike of the

■

Civic solidarity and sports enthusiasm support each other in *Mystery, Alaska.*

■

intended Rangers game, of his son's wanting to give up school to turn hockey professional, of his young daughter Marla's excessive involvement with Stevie, and of his wife's ever daring to oppose him.

The plot thickens further when Biebe, still aching to play and with no coaching experience, is made to coach the team. He tries to persuade the unwilling Judge Burns, once a school coach, to take over the assignment. This and much more

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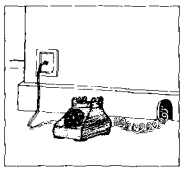
(signed) Jason Ng, Circulation Manager, Sept. 28, 1999

makes for both funny and fraught situations, especially after a sports network and a passel of famous sports figures and journalists descend on Mystery to cover the game. The sundry plot elements are woven cannily into a solid dramatic texture.

Crowe is rough-hewn maleness incarnate, and the now-snowy-haired Burt Reynolds is an imposing patriarch and judge, as the two sometimes oppose, sometimes aid each other. Mary McCormack exudes warmth as the devoted but unjustly suspected Donna, and Rachel Wilson is charming as the inexperienced Marla, who, determined to lose her virginity, makes a riotous attempt at seduction. Each member of the hockey team is pungently portrayed, with Ron Eldard especially good as the randy Skank. There is fine work from the Irish actor Colm Meaney as the alternately blustery and bewildered mayor, Lolita Davidovich as the mayor's all-too-human wife, Maury Chaykin as the hayseed lawyer, and Hank Azaria as the slippery Charles, whose suppressed hometown pride finally takes over.



Peter Deming's cinematography has as many ways of looking at snow as the Eskimos are said to have synonyms for it, and Carter Burwell's music, incorporating some standards, is always apt. But what makes the ultimate difference is the way civic solidarity and sports enthusiasm support each other in a film whose benevolence nicely avoids sappiness.

■ Lawrence Kasdan's writing and directing credits are numerous and varied, and include such popular successes as *Return of the Jedi*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Body Heat*, *The Big Chill*, *The Accidental Tourist*, and several others. His latest, which, as so often, he both wrote and directed, is ***Mumford***, a mild satire on the shrink business and a slightly sophomoric kidding of the follies of small-town life.

Young Dr. Mumford, therapist extraordinaire, arrives in the manicured but miserable little town of Mumford, where both his name and his skill arouse enthusiasm as well as some opposition. He is equally effective with Althea Brockett, a crass tycoon's neglected wife and compulsive shopper; with Sofie Crisp, the divorced and chronic-fatigue-ridden daughter of a termagant mother; with Henry Follett, an overweight and sex-starved druggist harboring Mickey Spillane-ish fantasies; and with Nessa Watkins, a pseudo-sophisticated, tough-acting, confused teenager. And when a would-be patient such as the braggart lawyer Dillard becomes offensive, Mumford just throws him out.

But this Dr. Mumford is as bogus as his name. He is actually a former ruthless IRS investigator and crashed drug addict who has reinvented himself. His strengths are a talent for listening and a curt manner that somehow inspires confidence. Certainly his unorthodox methods pay off. He visits Althea in her home, takes long walks with Sofie, and plays catch with Skip, the young billionaire computer whiz whose Panda Modems are named after his favorite animal, and who buoyantly skateboards through town when not at work inventing a female doll that will be the perfect sexual mate for his repressed self. Not only does Mumford cure his patients, he also finds unlikely but ideal lovers for them.

It is all patent nonsense, but some of it makes for droll viewing, even if Loren Dean's Mumford is too boring, Hope Davis's Sofie too unattractive, and Pruitt Taylor Vince's (Follett's) fantasies, shown as black-and-white sequences, are rather too cutesy takeoffs on genre films. The local therapists, male and female, who, envious of Mumford, join the vengeful lawyer (Martin Short) in unmasking him, are excessively caricatural, though well acted by David Paymer and Jane Adams. Indeed, everyone is either a caricature, a stick figure, or an idealization like Lily, the no-nonsense black counter-woman (Alfre Woodard), a perfect white-liberal cliché. Though she, of course, doesn't need a shrink, only a man, Mumford fixes her up, too—as he does all others (including himself, with one of his patients).

There is one truly funny invention in *Mumford*, albeit derived from Woody Allen's *Zelig*, which I won't give away. The rest of the film, in a less gullible and benighted world, you couldn't give away if you wanted to. **NR**

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

IfyaseewhatImean

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 1

THERE'LL be time to look deeper, and more comprehensively, at the biography *Dutch*, by Edmund Morris, but the publishing arrangements require that some things get said punctually, in response to bits and pieces of the book that have got out, most accessibly, the segment in *Newsweek* magazine. The publisher's tight control of the book itself excluded circulation up until two or three days ago. And except for book critics, whose discipline requires that for certain publishing ventures they set all other concerns to one side, you can't expect an 800-odd page book to have been read 24 hours after it becomes available.

That said, one doesn't want time to go by without sharp commentary on points the public has been told were made by Morris in his book. Most conspicuously the charge that Reagan was an "airhead." The definition given by the *American Heritage Dictionary* is "a silly, rather unintelligent person." The succeeding circle of criticism is that Mr. Reagan simply gave no thought to government or to the warp and woof of policy.

I don't remember whether, while doing his research, Mr. Morris questioned me, a very old friend of Mr. Reagan uninvolved in his administration. If he had, I'd have given him a detail that belongs in the database of any exploration of Reagan's curiosity about policy.

The time was Easter weekend, 1981; the scene, Barbados. The president and the First Lady were weekending there at a villa, spending two days with old friend Claudette Colbert at her house on the beach. The Reagans' two guests were my wife and I.

We came back to the villa late that first night, and swam together in the pool, in the dark, and the president said a word or two about unemployment statistics. The next morning I found under our door a page and a half of legal paper written over by our host. It was a penciled analysis of the habits of those who collect unemployment statistics. Mr. Reagan's complaint, in this scribbled memo to me, was that insufficient attention was being paid to the number of Americans who, during the preceding month, had found employment. I don't have the language or figures in memory, but what he wrote was that if the statisticians report that unemployment is 9.2 million and was 9.2 million the month before, the impression is given that the pool of unemployed is static. Whereas (he wrote), in the last thirty days 450,000 people found jobs. Though the net situation might be unchanged (9.2 million still out of work), an encouraging dynamism is at work. Midnight reflections on such questions, written out, aren't the doing of dormant minds.

Is the airhead business the work of the fictitious character about whom so many are up in arms? He certainly does get in the way. There is, for instance, a disturbing ineptitude in purported transcriptions of speech. Here is Morris's imaginary character talking to Bush before Bush's inauguration. Bush is asked his views of the outgoing president. Exactly quoted from the book: "Gotta tellya I really love that guy, he's such a terrific fellow. Only one thing kinda bothered me, whichistersay, just *never* been able to understand—guy never seemed to *need* anybody."

British-born (Morris is a native of Kenya) writers have a terrible time rendering idiomatic American speech. Bush grew up in Greenwich, went to Andover and Yale, and it is burlesque to run his words together conveying a false impression of how Bush talks and sounds, and there are lots of us who have heard him talk informally a hundred times. It is a very easy device to eliminate for effect the space between words, and it is true that a recording machine notes no pauses that correspond with spaces between words. "Itisaveryeasydevice". . . would faithfully transcribe the sounds uttered when reading the preceding sentence quite normally. But presented in this way, there is distortion.

So that those even peripherally on the Reagan/Bush scene have reason to wonder: What has Edmund Morris done? Is it true (as reported) that he writes of the extraordinary spectacle of an American president addressing Russian students at the State University of Moscow that they were uninterested in what he was saying? The spectacle itself was top political theater, the head of the bourgeois world telling the incubational educational center of the Marxist world that they were all washed up . . . how can that have been less than theater of Olympic scale?

I do have one friend who got the book and read it in—eight hours! Something of a feat. He found it engrossing. Fifty years from now, he thinks, it might be held to communicate most authentically the sound and feel of the Reagan era, on a par with Norman Mailer's *Armies of the Night*, conveying the sound and feel of the Sixties. But one notes, early on, sadly, distractions.

Loose Bullets on Buchanan

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 24

THE daily swirl around Pat Buchanan asks a lot of questions relevant and informative, but also one or two that are nothing of the sort, these last arising from the ongoing question of whether P. Buchanan was—ever was—is—anti-Semitic. In the past he courted a negative finding on this point but in the current wars he is being hit on grounds that this sometime critic finds bizarre, namely: Was our diplomacy right in how we dealt with Hitler?

In the larger frame, at both ends of Hitler—1933 and 1945—the answer clearly is that the diplomacy was defective. Certainly nobody who lost his life in World War II, speaking from the grave, would say otherwise than that 1) the war should, yes, have been won; but 2) preferably, it should have been aborted. A lot of historians have written on the theme, or at least touched on it: that Hitler could have been stopped in the Rhineland in 1936, and of course should have been.

Go forward nine years. Hitler's miserable life has been terminated in the bunker. Between 1936 and 1945, Hitler managed to kill 6 million Jews, over 4 million Germans, and some 20 million Russians and East Europeans. That is bad stuff—all wars involve bad stuff. But it was also evil stuff, because extermination camps are of a different order of iniquity than shooting people in wars.

What then happened? Over 20 million people were executed or starved to death by Stalin, who made possible the Korean War, in which over 2 million were killed and, conjecturally, the success of Mao Tse-

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tung, which meant some 60 million dead. And so on, through Vietnam and Cambodia. One doesn't know whether the triumph of Stalin ignited Stalinism in those other countries, but certainly it is possible that it did. Stalin thought it did; so did his Marxist fellow travellers.

It should be possible to ask out loud: Would things have been better if Hitler had conquered Moscow? They could hardly have been worse. Hitler had already conquered Western Europe. The moment appeared to have gone by when he had the power necessary to overrun Britain. Whereas Communism, with its animating ideology, had historical, economic, and even philosophical heft, Nazism was a single man's perversion, a melange of prejudices, insights, and grievances transmogrified in an afflatus that infected one man and briefly hypnotized an entire people. Intellectually it was moribund the day after it was distilled. It is inconceivable that *Mein Kampf* could have been promulgated other than by Hitler.

So Pat Buchanan comes along and argues that Great Britain would have been better off, in 1939, letting Hitler take Poland—and go on to take Moscow.

Critics are justified in disagreeing, but it hardly follows from the conjecture that Buchanan is moved by the anti-Semitic energumen. The persevering critic can say—Don't you see, this is simply another round, artfully disguised as geopolitics, fired from his anti-Semitic artillery. But this is on the order of saying that Clinton's concern for children's health traces to his stepfather's mishandling of him as a child. Maybe it does. But it takes an imagination as active as that of the late Robert Welch, who reasoned from our losses at Yalta, Potsdam, Berlin, and Peking, to the core belief of his John Birch Society—that Eisenhower was an agent of the Communists. To travel from Buchanan's provocative and irresponsible impetuosities of ten years ago to the implied thesis that he didn't want to hurt Hitler because he admired him so, is intellectually embarrassing, and the genuine hero, John McCain, should desist from talking about the glorious achievements of World War II as if anybody who wished it might have been avoided was soft on Hitler.

Stephen Vincent Benet had a wonderful story, "The Curfew Tolls." The bedraggled French character in that 18th-century story moved about from Paris to Cairo to Austria, always telling what *he* would have done had *he* been the commanding French general. He dies at a relatively early age and we see his humble tombstone: "Here Lies Napoleon Bonaparte." In the story, the protagonist is born just a few years too late (or too early, I forget). The point is dynamically made that historical events are the creatures of adventitious actors. It is a retrospective game—What if . . . ? But Buchanan should be allowed to play in it without incurring flimsy charges against his motives.

There are 100 reasons for voting against Buchanan. The 101st is not needed.

Was Anybody Responsible For East Timor?

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 10

THE morning news, niftily relayed by *Slate* magazine's "Today's Papers," reminds us of diplomatic inadvertencies. Here is one without international consequences, picked up by the *Wall Street Journal*: "President Clinton is headed to the Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC), held this year in New Zealand. It was . . . carefully scheduled to avoid such national holidays as Japan's Respect for the Elderly Day or Chile's Army Day, but no country told schedulers about Rosh Hashanah. As a result, several Jewish Clinton aides will be aboard Air Force One as the Jewish New Year begins, not even sure when Friday at sundown is, especially since the plane is crossing the International Date Line."

Bad planning. Meanwhile Asian participants in APEC are roiling over the virtual disappearance of their big conference from the news, yielding to day-by-day developments in East Timor. The resentment is one part vanity, one part a need to focus international attention on what happens in APEC, one part sheer frustration over East Timor.

On that front, we ask most pointedly: What is the purpose of diplomacy if not to avert where possible, or to postpone where not possible, crises?

The scheduling of the plebiscite in East Timor two weeks ago is a brazen ineptitude the consequences of which have already threatened the well-being of one-quarter of the population. The U.N. was directly involved, monitoring the vote. *Le Monde* inveighs against the U.N.'s one-night stand. "By taking on the organization of the referendum, the U.N. implicitly guaranteed not only the security of the voting operation but also that of the voters in the aftermath of the poll. It has betrayed their trust; it has abandoned them without defense."

The paper goes on to wonder whether the organization can survive its stepfatherly treatment of East Timor, though that judgment is severe, and calls to mind the senior ineptitude, which is that of the sponsors of the referendum. Two parties brought this on. The first, the restive East Timorese. The second, the government in Jakarta. Rudimentary polling techniques should have sufficed to predict how the vote would go, in a situation in which 80 percent ended up voting for independence. Informed planning would have brought Jakarta and Dili together to ask: Do we wish to conduct a referendum that a) will call for independence for East Timor, which vote will then, b) trigger a bloody resistance by the militia which, c) Jakarta will not be equipped or, really, disposed, to control? Suppose that tomorrow the referendum could be rescheduled in the light of the continuing pain. How would the population vote? A homey analogue brings us to New York City. Sixteen terrorism-bound Puerto Ricans are in jail, apprehended before they had consummated their program. President Clinton addresses them: If you will renounce terrorism (renounce East Timor independence) I will give you freedom. Four of the 16 refused, even as 10 or 15 percent of the East Timorese would rather die than continue their submission to Jakarta. It is so in every situation: Palestinians who prefer death to peace; Israeli, Irish, Kosovar, Serb, Rwandan, Egyptian bitter enders.

Fanaticism lives, at every level. The challenge of transmuting the fanaticism of the terrorist to the noble cause of the revolutionist requires a study of statecraft, and of the differences between George Washington and Xanana Guzmao. It is hardly difficult to write a persuasive declaration of independence against such governments as have ruled in Jakarta in the past 50 years, but we are speaking of 800,000 people in a country of 200 million, which leaves a whiff of *Passport to Pimlico*, the fantasy movie about the discovery by a tiny borough of London of an ancient covenant granting it the right of independence; except that in the movie, the complications were merely amusing. In East Timor, they are murderous.

National security advisor Sandy Berger tried in occluded language to not-say it when asked by Jim Lehrer whether any Asian consortium could manage a relief mission into East Timor if Jakarta was opposed. He didn't quite get it out, but the answer to that is: No. There is no way Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, Malaysia, the Philippines, and even Japan, are going to treat East Timor the way MacArthur treated Okinawa. Meanwhile hundreds, including priests and nuns, are dying every day. There will be plenty for Sandy Berger and President Clinton to brood over on Rosh Hashanah in the long trip across the Pacific. —UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

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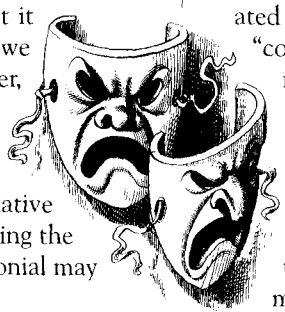
■ THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER ■

FLORENCE KING

THERE seems to be a journalistic convention that columnists who take Pat Buchanan to task must include a testimonial about how delightful it is to know him personally. Mona Charen was "very fond" of him when they worked together in the Reagan White House, Bob Novak praises his sense of humor, and Jack Germond and assorted other McLaughlinites never screamed with a nicer guy. If you come to bury Pat, you must praise him first.

I don't know him. I was on his radio show some years ago, but it was via telephone, so we never met. We do, however, have two things in common: We're contemporaries (I'm three years older), and we're both native Washingtonians. That being the case, the requisite testimonial may be at hand.



In college, my sorority sisters and I used to go to the Connecticut Avenue Hot Shoppe. In his memoir, *Right from the Beginning*, Buchanan talks about how he and his gang also used to go there to pick fights. One night, some truculent teenagers came in. They were obviously looking for trouble so we decided to leave before a rumble got started. As we were scurrying out, though, one of the boys, sporting dark Fonzie sideburns and a puckish grin, gallantly opened the door for us. Was it Pat? I don't know, but I've often wondered.

There was a time when Pat Buchanan was my favorite columnist, TV personality, and public figure, which is why I broke my ironclad rule about not going on shows to go on his: I simply wanted to talk to him. It's hard to pinpoint exactly when disillusionment set in, but I do know that what began to bother me was not his politics but his writing. I really don't care what views people hold as long as they describe them well, but something was happening to Pat's literary style.

A column that made me do a double-take was the one on the controversy surrounding the FDR memorial. It was, you will recall, an artistic controversy having to do with sculpture and placement, but Pat ignored all that and launched a foaming jeremiad at FDR for destroying the "Old Republic" that went all the way back to 1918, and featured a sentence that even Faith Baldwin would delete: "FDR spent World War I sneaking off into the Virginia countryside with Lucy Mercer, cheating on the mother of his five children, breaking Eleanor's heart."

Matters worsened when he got fixated on movies. His column on the "cognitive elite" controversy growing out of Charles Murray's IQ findings had nothing to do with the cognitive elite or Charles Murray. It was about Sgt. Alvin York, whose few years of schooling in the Cumberland Mountains inspired Pat to extol the moral superiority of ignorance and recycle the threadbare cliché that many a drop-out "hired and fired" college graduates.

A clue to what brought on all this was his gulpy mention of York's modest dream of owning "a piece of bottom land." Since native Washingtonians are not up on plowing problems, I knew he had gotten this from the Gary Cooper movie, which made much of it. It was obvious that instead of taking the time and trouble to write 800 carefully reasoned words, he had spent deadline eve in front of his VCR and then dashed off a disjointed column from his reveries.

His writing already in jeopardy, his thinking went to pot as well after he saw *Forrest Gump*. He became the movie's self-appointed publicist, heaping such clamorous praise on Gump's multitude of virtues that he inadvertently equated loyalty, duty, honor, country, morality, hard work, and true love with an IQ of 75. "How on earth," he asked incredulously, "did this film get through the PC screeners?" It didn't; it just got through Pat. It was a satire on the American success story: Gump as the dumb sports star, the dumb patriot, the dumb businessman, and the dumb politician, landing on his feet every time.

Pat next turned his blind eye to *Braveheart*. Predisposed to flack it as a right-wing patriotic saga, he missed its uncanny similarity to the left-wing *Spartacus* written by Hollywood Ten member Dalton Trumbo: Prole with inborn gift for military strategy raises army, yells "Freedom!" a lot, suffers horrible death, lives on in hearts of oppressed. Memo to Mel Gibson: Change Cassius to Edward I.

His cinematic obsessions are the key to his strange behavior of late. Why did he publish a soft-on-Hitler book in the midst of a political bid? Why did he cozy up to Marxist stormy petrel Lenora Fulani? There is a simple explanation, and fittingly, it comes from a movie: Pat Buchanan has a Walter Mitty complex. What lures him is not running for president, but the fantasy of running for president, preferably against all odds. Under his bombast about pitchforks and riding to the sound of the guns is a thwarted Danny Kaye figure yearning to exchange the passive pursuits of writing and talking for an imaginary world of mortal danger, fearless battle, and heroic legend.

At the moment, his favorite movie is *President Pat*, but who knows what other tapes lurk beside his VCR? *Captain Pat Hornblower*, destroyer of the politically correct Navy. *Going Pat's Way*, wherein a lovable jaunty priest singlehandedly takes America back to God. *The Great Patsby*, a cautionary tale about operating without set values. *A Pat for All Seasons*, wherein the hero is martyred for his unpopular beliefs. When he's up, he watches *Young Pat*, when he's down, he watches *Pat in Winter*, and for peasant-rallying medieval moods he turns to *Patanhoe*.

For a change of pace he plugs patriotism as a song-and-dance man in *Yankee Doodle Pat*, and even more surprisingly, in *Gunga Pat*. He doesn't usually see himself as a little brown brother, but he can't resist the scene in which he uses his last breath to blow the warning bugle. There's also *Pat and Delilah*; he's not comfortable mushing with Hedy Lamarr, but he has a real feel for the jawbone of an ass.

He always saves the best for last so we will too. A remake of the George C. Scott epic: *Pat*. **NR**

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Consumers look for the VISA® brand. Stock the table linen that sells itself and watch your sales rise. Call (864) 503-2758 or talk with your VISA® table linen supplier.

LIFETIME SOIL-RELEASE GUARANTEE

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